MAURINE

AND OTHER POEMS

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

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Ella Wheeler Wilcox

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AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

ELLA WHEELER. Wilcox

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I step across the mystic border-land,
And look upon the wonder-world of Art.
How beautiful, how beautiful its hills!
And all its valleys, how surpassing fair!

The winding paths that lead up to the heights
Are polished by the footsteps of the great.
The mountain-peaks stand very near to God:
The chosen few whose feet have trod thereon
Have talked with Him, and with the angels walked.

Here are no sounds of discord—no profane
Or senseless gossip of unworthy things—
Only the songs of chisels and of pens,
Of busy brushes, and ecstatic strains
Of souls surcharged with music most divine.
Here is no idle sorrow, no poor grief
For any day or object left behind—
For time is counted precious, and herein
Is such complete abandonment of Self
That tears turn into rainbows, and enhance
The beauty of the land where all is fair.

Awed and afraid, I cross the border-land.
Oh, who am I, that I dare enter here
Where the great artists of the world have trod—
The genius-crowned aristocrats of Earth?
Only the singer of a little song;
Yet loving Art with such a mighty love
I hold it greater to have won a place
Just on the fair land's edge, to make my grave,
Than in the outer world of greed and gain
To sit upon a royal throne and reign.

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MAURINE

AND OTHER POEMS.

MAURINE.

Part I.

I sat and sewed, and sang some tender tune,
Oh, beauteous was that morn in early June!
Mellow with sunlight, and with blossoms fair:
The climbing rose-tree grew about me there,
And checked with shade the sunny portico
Where, morns like this, I came to read, or sew.

I heard the gate click, and a firm quick tread
Upon the walk. No need to turn my head;
I would mistake, and doubt my own voice sounding.
Before his step upon the gravel bounding.
In an unstudied attitude of grace,
He stretched his comely form; and from his face
He tossed the dark, damp curls; and at my knees,
With his broad hat he fanned the lazy breeze,
And turned his head, and lifted his large eyes,
Of that strange hue we see in ocean dyes,
And call it blue sometimes, and sometimes green,
And save in poet-eyes, not elsewhere seen.

"Lest I should meet with my fair lady's scorning,
For calling quite so early in the morning,
I've brought a passport that can never fail,"
He said, and, laughing, laid the morning mail
Upon my lap. "I'm welcome? so I thought!
I'll figure by the letters that I brought
How glad you are to see me. Only one?
And that one from a lady? I'm undone!
That, lightly skimmed, you'll think me *such* a bore,
And wonder why I did not bring you four.
It's ever thus: a woman cannot get
So many letters that she will not fret
O'er one that did not come."
"I'll prove you wrong,"
I answered gayly, "here upon the spot!
This little letter, precious if not long,
Is just the one, of all you might have brought,
To please me. You have heard me speak, I'm sure,
Of Helen Trevor: she writes here to say
She's coming out to see me; and will stay
Till Autumn, maybe. She is, like her note,
Petite and dainty, tender, loving, pure.
You'd know her by a letter that she wrote,
For a sweet tinted thing. 'Tis always so:—
Letters all blots, though finely written, show
A slovenly person. Letters stiff and white
Bespeak a nature honest, plain, upright.
And tissuey, tinted, perfumed notes, like this,
Tell of a creature formed to pet and kiss."

My listener heard me with a slow, odd smile;
Stretched in abandon at my feet, the while,
He fanned me idly with his broad-brimmed hat.
"Then all young ladies must be formed for that!"
He laughed, and said.
"Their letters read, and look,
As like as twenty copies of one book.
They're written in a dainty, spider scrawl,
To 'darling, precious Kate,' or 'Fan,' or 'Moll.'
The 'dearest, sweetest' friend they ever had.
They say they 'want to see you, oh, so bad!'
Vow they'll 'forget you, never, *never*, oh!'
And then they tell about a splendid beau—
A lovely hat—a charming dress, and send
A little scrap of this to every friend.
And then to close, for lack of something better,
They beg you'll 'read and burn this horrid letter.'"

He watched me, smiling. He was prone to vex
And hector me with flings upon my sex.
He liked, he said, to have me flash and frown,
So he could tease me, and then laugh me down.
My storms of wrath amused him very much:
He liked to see me go off at a touch;
Anger became me—made my color rise,
And gave an added luster to my eyes.
So he would talk—and so he watched me now,
To see the hot flush mantle cheek and brow.

Instead, I answered coolly, with a smile,
Felling a seam with utmost care, meanwhile.

"The caustic tongue of Vivian Dangerfield
Is barbed as ever, for my sex, this morn.
Still unconvinced, no smallest point I yield.
Woman I love, and trust, despite your scorn.
There is some truth in what you say? Well, yes!
Your statements usually hold more or less.
Some women write weak letters—(some men do;)
Some make professions, knowing them untrue.
And woman's friendship, in the time of need,
I own, too often proves a broken reed.
But I believe, and ever will contend,
Woman can be a sister woman's friend,
Giving from out her large heart's bounteous store
A living love—claiming to do no more
Than, through and by that love, she knows she can;
And living by her professions, *like a man.*
And such a tie, true friendship's silken tether,
Binds Helen Trevor's heart and mine together.
I love her for her beauty, meekness, grace;
For her white lily soul and angel face.
She loves me, for my greater strength, may be;
Loves — and would give her heart's best blood
for me.
And I, to save her from a pain, or cross,
Would suffer any sacrifice or loss.
Such can be woman's friendship for another.
Could man give more, or ask more from a brother?"

I paused: and Vivian leaned his massive head
Against the pillar of the portico,

Smiled his slow, skeptic smile, then laughed, and said:
"Nay, surely not—if what you say be so.
You've made a statement, but no proof's at hand.
Wait—do not flash your eyes so! Understand
I think you quite sincere in what you say:
You love your friend, and she loves you, to-day;
But friendship is not friendship at the best
Till circumstances put it to the test.
Man's, less demonstrative, stands strain and tear,
While woman's, half profession, fails to wear.
Two women love each other passing well—
Say Helen Trevor and Maurine La Pelle,
Just for example.
Let them daily meet
At ball and concert, in the church and street,
They kiss and coo, they visit, chat, caress;
Their love increases, rather than grows less;
And all goes well, till 'Helen dear' discovers
That 'Maurine darling' wins too many lovers.

And then her 'precious friend,' her 'pet,' her 'sweet,'
Becomes a 'minx,' a 'creature all deceit.'
Let Helen smile too oft on Maurine's beaux,
Or wear more stylish or becoming clothes,
Or sport a hat that has a longer feather—
And lo! the strain has broken 'friendship's tether.'
Maurine's sweet smile becomes a frown or pout;
'She's just begun to find that Helen out.'
The breach grows wider—anger fills each heart;

They drift asunder, whom 'but death could part.'
You shake your head? Oh, well, we'll never know!
It is not likely Fate will test you so.
You'll live, and love; and, meeting twice a year,
While life shall last, you'll hold each other dear.
I pray it may be so; it were not best
To shake your faith in woman by the test.
Keep your belief, and nurse it while you can.
I've faith in woman's friendship too—for man!
They're true as steel, as mothers, friends, and wives:
And that's enough to bless us all our lives.
That man's a selfish fellow, and a bore,
Who is unsatisfied, and asks for more."

"But there is need of more!" I here broke in.
"I hold that woman guilty of a sin,
Who would not cling to, and defend another,
As nobly as she would stand by a brother.
Who would not suffer for a sister's sake,
And, were there need to prove her friendship, make
'Most any sacrifice, nor count the cost.
Who would not do this for a friend is lost
To every nobler principle."
"Shame, shame!"
Cried Vivian, laughing, "for you now defame
The whole sweet sex; since there's not one would do
The thing you name, nor would I want her to.
I love the sex. My mother was a woman—
I hope my wife will be, and wholly human.
And if she wants to make some sacrifice,
I'll think her far more sensible and wise

To let her husband reap the benefit,
Instead of some old maid or senseless chit.
Selfish? Of course! I hold all love is so:
And I shall love my wife right well, I know.
Now there's a point regarding selfish love,
You thirst to argue with me, and disprove.
But since these cosy hours will soon be gone,
And all our meetings broken in upon,
No more of these rare moments must be spent
In vain discussions, or in argument.
I wish Miss Trevor was in—Jericho!
(You see the selfishness begins to show.)
She wants to see you?—So do I: but she
Will gain her wish, by taking you from me.
'Come all the same?' that means I'll be allowed
To realize that 'three can make a crowd.'
I do not like to feel myself *de trop*.
With two girl cronies would I not be so?
My ring would interrupt some private chat.
You'd ask me in and take my cane and hat,
And speak about the lovely summer day,
And think—'The lout! I wish he'd kept away.'
Miss Trevor'd smile, but just to hide a pout
And count the moments till I was shown out.
And, while I twirled my thumbs, I should sit wishing
That I had gone off hunting birds, or fishing.
No, thanks, Maurine! The iron hand of Fate,
(Or otherwise Miss Trevor's dainty fingers,)
Will bar my entrance into Eden's gate;
And I shall be like some poor soul that lingers

At heaven's portal, paying the price of sin,
Yet hoping to be pardoned and let in."

He looked so melancholy sitting there,
I laughed outright. "How well you act a part;
You look the very picture of despair!
You've missed your calling, sir! suppose you start
Upon a starring tour, and carve your name
With Booth's and Barrett's on the heights of Fame.
But now, tabooing nonsense, I shall send
For you to help me entertain my friend,
Unless you come without it. 'Cronies?' True,
Wanting our 'private chats' as cronies do.
And we'll take those, while you are reading Greek,
Or writing 'Lines to Dora's brow' or 'cheek.'
But when you have an hour or two of leisure,
Call as you now do, and afford like pleasure.
For never yet did heaven's sun shine on,
Or stars discover, that phenomenon,
In any country, or in any clime:
Two maids so bound, by ties of mind and heart,
They did not feel the heavy weight of time
In weeks of scenes wherein no man took part.
God made the sexes to associate:
Nor law of man, nor stern decree of Fate,
Can ever undo what His hand has done,
And, quite alone, make happy either one.
My Helen is an only child:—a pet
Of loving parents: and she never yet
Has been denied one boon for which she pleaded.
A fragile thing, her lightest wish was heeded.

Would she pluck roses? they must first be shorn,
By careful hands, of every hateful thorn.
And loving eyes must scan the pathway where
Her feet may tread, to see no stones are there.
She'll grow dull here, in this secluded nook,
Unless you aid me in the pleasant task
Of entertaining. Drop in with your book—
Read, talk, sing for her sometimes. What I ask,
Do once, to please me: then there'll be no need
For me to state the case again, or plead.
There's nothing like a woman's grace and beauty
To waken mankind to a sense of duty."

"I bow before the mandate of my queen:
Your slightest wish is law, Ma Belle Maurine,"
He answered smiling, "I'm at your command;
Point but one lily finger, or your wand,
And you will find a willing slave obeying.
There goes my dinner bell! I hear it saying
I've spent two hours here, lying at your feet,
Not profitable, maybe—surely sweet.
All time is money: now were I to measure
The time I spend here by its solid pleasure,
And that were coined in dollars, then I've laid
Each day a fortune at your feet, fair maid.
There goes that bell again! I'll say good-bye,
Or clouds will shadow my domestic sky.
I'll come again, as you would have me do,
And see your friend, while she is seeing you.
That's like by proxy being at a feast;
Unsatisfactory, to say the least."

He drew his fine shape up, and trod the land
With kingly grace. Passing the gate, his hand
He lightly placed the garden wall upon,
Leaped over like a leopard, and was gone.

And, going, took the brightness from the place,
Yet left the June day with a sweeter grace,
And my young soul so steeped in happy dreams,
Heaven itself seemed shown to me in gleams.

There is a time with lovers, when the heart
First slowly rouses from its dreamless sleep,
To all the tumult of a passion life,
Ere yet have wakened jealousy and strife.
Just as a young, untutored child will start
Out of a long hour's slumber, sound and deep,
And lie and smile with rosy lips, and cheeks,
In a sweet, restful trance, before it speaks.
A time when yet no word the spell has broken,
Save what the heart unto the soul has spoken,
In quickened throbs, and sighs but half-suppressed.
A time when that sweet truth, all unconfessed,
Gives added fragrance to the summer flowers,
A golden glory to the passing hours,
A hopeful beauty to the plainest face,
And lends to life a new and tender grace.

When the full heart has climbed the heights of bliss,
And, smiling, looks back o'er the golden past,
I think it finds no sweeter hour than this
In all love-life. For, later, when the last

Translucent drop o'erflows the cup of joy,
And love, more mighty than the heart's control,
Surges in words of passion from the soul,
And vows are asked and given, shadows rise
Like mists before the sun in noonday skies,
Vague fears, that prove the brimming cup's alloy:
A dread of change—the crowning moment's curse,
Since what is perfect, change but renders worse:
A vain desire to cripple Time, who goes
Bearing our joys away, and bringing woes.
And later, doubts and jealousies awaken,
And plighted hearts are tempest-tossed, and shaken.
Doubt sends a test, that goes a step too far,
A wound is made, that, healing, leaves a scar,
Or one heart, full with love's sweet satisfaction,
Thinks truth once spoken always understood,
While one is pining for the tender action
And whispered word by which, of old, 'twas wooed.

But this blest hour, in love's glad, golden day,
Is like the dawning, ere the radiant ray
Of glowing Sol has burst upon the eye,
But yet is heralded in earth and sky,
Warm with its fervor, mellow with its light,
While Care still slumbers in the arms of night.
But Hope, awake, hears happy birdlings sing,
And thinks of all a summer day may bring.

In this sweet calm, my young heart lay at rest,
Filled with a blissful sense of peace; nor guessed
That sullen clouds were gathering in the skies
To hide the glorious sun, ere it should rise.

Part II.

To little birds that never tire of humming
About the garden, in the summer weather,
Aunt Ruth compared us, after Helen's coming,
As we two roamed, or sat and talked together.
Twelve months apart, we had so much to say
Of school days gone—and time since passed away;
Of that old friend, and this; of what we'd done;
Of how our separate paths in life had run;
Of what we would do, in the coming years;
Of plans and castles, hopes and dreams and fears.
All these, and more, as soon as we found speech,
We touched upon, and skimmed from this to that
But at the first, each only gazed on each,
And, dumb with joy, that did not need a voice
Like lesser joys, to say, "Lo! I rejoice,"
With smiling eyes and clasping hands we sat
Wrapped in that peace, felt but with those dear,
Contented just to know each other near.
But when this silent eloquence gave place
To words, 'twas like the rising of a flood
Above a dam. We sat there, face to face,
And let our talk glide on where'er it would,
Speech never halting in its speed or zest,
Save when our rippling laughter let it rest;
Just as a stream will sometimes pause and play
About a bubbling spring, then dash away.

No wonder, then, the third day's sun was nigh
Up to the zenith when my friend and I
Opened our eyes from slumber long and deep:
Nature demanding recompense for hours
Spent in the portico, among the flowers,
Halves of two nights we should have spent in sleep.

So this third day, we breakfasted at one:
Then walked about the garden in the sun,
Hearing the thrushes and the robins sing,
And looking to see what buds were opening.

The clock chimed three, and we yet strayed at will
About the yard in morning dishabille,
When Aunt Ruth came, with apron o'er her head,
Holding a letter in her hand, and said,
"Here is a note, from Vivian I opine;
At least his servant brought it. And now, girls,
You may think this is no concern of mine,
But in my day young ladies did not go,
Till almost bed-time roaming to and fro
In morning wrappers, and with tangled curls,
The very pictures of forlorn distress.
'Tis three o'clock, and time for you to dress.
Come! read your note and hurry in, Maurine,
And make yourself fit object to be seen."

Helen was bending o'er an almond bush,
And ere she looked up I had read the note,
And calmed my heart, that, bounding, sent a flush
To brow and cheek, at sight of aught *he* wrote.

"Ma Belle Maurine:" (so Vivian's billet ran,)
"Is it not time I saw your cherished guest?
'Pity the sorrows of a poor young man,'
Banished from all that makes existence blest.
I'm dying to see—your friend; and I will come
And pay respects, hoping you'll be at home
To-night at eight. Expectantly, V. D."

Inside my belt I slipped the billet, saying,
"Helen, go make yourself most fair to see:
Quick! hurry now! no time for more delaying!
In just five hours a caller will be here,
And you must look your prettiest, my dear!
Begin your toilet right away. I know
How long it takes you to arrange each bow—
To twist each curl, and loop your skirts aright.
And you must prove you are *au fait* to-night,
And make a perfect toilet: for our caller
Is man, and critic, poet, artist, scholar,
And views with eyes of all."
"Oh, oh! Maurine,"
Cried Helen with a well-feigned look of fear,
"You've frightened me so I shall not appear:
I'll hide away, refusing to be seen
By such an ogre. Woe is me! bereft
Of all my friends, my peaceful home I've left,
And strayed away into the dreadful wood
To meet the fate of poor Red Riding Hood.
No, Maurine, no! you've given me such a fright,
I'll not go near your ugly wolf to-night."

Meantime we'd left the garden; and I stood
In Helen's room, where she had thrown herselt
Upon a couch, and lay, a winsome elf,
Pouting and smiling, cheek upon her arm,
Not in the least a portrait of alarm.
"Now sweet!" I coaxed, and knelt by her, "be good!
Go curl your hair; and please your own Maurine,
By putting on that lovely grenadine.
Not wolf, nor ogre, neither Caliban,
Nor Mephistopheles, you'll meet to-night,
But what the ladies call 'a nice young man'!
Yet one worth knowing—strong with health and might
Of perfect manhood; gifted, noble, wise;
Moving among his kind with loving eyes,
And helpful hand; progressive, brave, refined,
After the image of his Maker's mind."

"Now, now, Maurine!" cried Helen, "I believe
It is your lover coming here this eve.
Why have you never written of him, pray?
Is the day set?—and when? Say, Maurine, say!"

Had I betrayed by some too fervent word
The secret love that all my being stirred?
My lover? Ay! My heart proclaimed him so;
But first *his* lips must win the sweet confession,
Ere even Helen be allowed to know.
I must straightway erase the slight impression
Made by the words just uttered.

"Foolish child!"
I gayly cried, "your fancy's straying wild.
Just let a girl of eighteen hear the name
Of maid and youth uttered about one time,
And off her fancy goes, at break-neck pace,
Defying circumstances, reason, space—
And straightway builds romances so sublime
They put all Shakespeare's dramas to the shame.
This Vivian Dangerfield is neighbor, friend
And kind companion; bringing books and flowers,
And, by his thoughtful actions without end,
Helping me pass some otherwise long hours;
But he has never breathed a word of love.
If you still doubt me, listen while I prove
My statement by the letter that he wrote.
'Dying to meet—my friend!' (she could not see
The dash between that meant so much to me.)
'Will come this eve, at eight, and hopes we may
Be in to greet him.' Now I think you'll say
'T is not much like a lover's tender note."

We laugh, we jest, not meaning what we say;
We hide our thoughts, by light words lightly spoken,
And pass on heedless, till we find one day
They've bruised our hearts, or left some other broken.

I sought my room, and trilling some blithe air,
Opened my wardrobe, wondering what to wear.
Momentous question! femininely human!
More than all others, vexing mind of woman,

Since that sad day, when in her discontent,
To search for leaves, our fair first mother went.
All undecided what I should put on,
At length I made selection of a lawn—
White, with a tiny pink vine overrun:—
My simplest robe, but Vivian's favorite one.
And placing a single flowret in my hair,
I crossed the hall to Helen's chamber, where
I found her with her fair locks all let down,
Brushing the kinks out, with a pretty frown.
'Twas like a picture, or a pleasing play,
To watch her make her toilet. She would stand,
And turn her head first this, and then that way,
Trying effect of ribbon, bow or band.
Then she would pick up something else, and curve
Her lovely neck, with cunning, bird-like grace,
And watch the mirror while she put it on,
With such a sweetly grave and thoughtful face;
And then to view it all would sway, and swerve
Her lithe young body, like a graceful swan.

Helen was over medium height, and slender
Even to frailty. Her great, wistful eyes
Were like the deep blue of autumnal skies;
And through them looked her soul, large, loving, tender.
Her long, light hair was lusterless, except
Upon the ends, where burnished sunbeams slept,
And on the earlocks; and she looped the curls
Back with a shell comb, studded thick with pearls,

Costly yet simple. Her pale loveliness,
That night, was heightened by her rich, black dress,
That trailed behind her, leaving half in sight
Her taper arms, and shoulders marble white.

I was not tall as Helen, and my face
Was shaped and colored like my grandsire's race;
For through his veins my own received the warm,
Red blood of southern France, which curved my
form,
And glowed upon my cheek in crimson dyes,
And bronzed my hair, and darkled in my eyes.
And as the morning trails the skirts of night,
And dusky night puts on the garb of morn,
And walk together when the day is born,
So we two glided down the hall and stair,
Arm clasping arm, into the parlor, where
Sat Vivian, bathed in sunset's gorgeous light.
He rose to greet us. Oh! his form was grand;
And he possessed that power, strange, occult,
Called magnetism, lacking better word,
Which moves the world, achieving great result
Where genius fails completely. Touch his hand,
It thrilled through all your being—meet his eye,
And you were moved, yet knew not how, or why.
Let him but rise, you felt the air was stirred
By an electric current.

This strange force
Is mightier than genius. Rightly used,

It leads to grand achievements; all things yield
Before its mystic presence, and its field
Is broad as earth and heaven. But abused,
It sweeps like a poison simoon on its course
Bearing miasma in its scorching breath,
And leaving all it touches struck with death.

Far-reaching science shall yet tear away
The mystic garb that hides it from the day,
And drag it forth and bind it with its laws,
And make it serve the purposes of men,
Guided by common sense and reason. Then
We'll hear no more of seance, table-rapping,
And all that trash, o'er which the world is gaping,
Lost in effect, while science seeks the cause.

Vivian was not conscious of his power:
Or, if he was, knew not its full extent.
He knew his glance would make a wild beast cower,
And yet he knew not that his large eyes sent
Into the heart of woman the same thrill
That made the lion servant of his will.
And even strong men felt it.

He arose,
Reached forth his hand, and in it clasped my own,
While I held Helen's; and he spoke some word
Of pleasant greeting in his low, round tone,
Unlike all other voices I have heard.
Just as the white cloud, at the sunrise, glows

With roseate colors, so the pallid hue
Of Helen's cheek, like tinted sea-shells grew.
Through mine, his hand caused hers to tremble: such
Was the all-mast'ring magic of his touch.

Then we sat down, and talked about the weather,
The neighborhood—some author's last new book.
But, when I could, I left the two together
To make acquaintance, saying I must look
After the chickens—my especial care;
And ran away, and left them, laughing, there.

Knee-deep, through clover, to the poplar grove,
I waded, where my pets were wont to rove:
And there I found the foolish mother hen
Brooding her chickens underneath a tree,
An easy prey for foxes. "Chick-a-dee,"
Quoth I, while reaching for the downy things
That, chirping, peeped from out the mother-wings,
"How very human is your folly! When
There waits a haven, pleasant, bright, and warm,
And one to lead you thither from the storm
And lurking dangers, yet you turn away,
And, thinking to be your own protector, stray
Into the open jaws of death: for, see!
An owl is sitting in this very tree
You thought safe shelter. Go now to your pen,"
And, followed by the clucking, clamorous hen,
So like the human mother here again,

Moaning because a strong, protecting arm
Would shield her little ones from cold and harm,
I carried back my garden hat brimful
Of chirping chickens, like white balls of wool,
And snugly housed them.
And just then I heard
A sound like gentle winds among the trees,
Or pleasant waters in the Summer, stirred
And set in motion by a passing breeze.
'T was Helen singing: and, as I drew near,
Another voice, a tenor full and clear,
Mingled with hers, as murmuring streams unite,
And flow on stronger in their wedded might.

It was a way of Helen's, not to sing
The songs that other people sang. She took
Sometimes an extract from an ancient book;
Again some floating, fragmentary thing
And such she fitted to old melodies,
Or else composed the music. One of these
She sang that night; and Vivian caught the strain,
And joined her in the chorus, or refrain.

SONG.

O thou, mine other, stronger part!
Whom yet I cannot hear, or see,
Come thou, and take this loving heart,
That longs to yield its all to thee,
I call mine own—Oh, come to me!
Love, answer back, I come to thee,
I come to thee.

This hungry heart, so warm, so large,
Is far too great a care for me.
I have grown weary of the charge
I keep so sacredly for thee.
Come thou, and take my heart from me.
Love, answer back, I come to thee,
I come to thee.

I am aweary, waiting here
For one who tarries long from me.
O! art thou far, or art thou near?
And must I still be sad for thee?
Or wilt thou straightway come to me?
Love, answer, I am near to thee,
I come to thee

The melody, so full of plaintive chords,
Sobbed into silence—echoing down the strings
Like voice of one who walks from us, and sings.
Vivian had leaned upon the instrument
The while they sang. But, as he spoke those words,
"Love, I am near to thee, I come to thee,"
He turned his grand head slowly round, and bent
His lustrous, soulful, speaking gaze on me.
And my young heart, eager to own its king,
Sent to my eyes a great, glad, trustful light
Of love and faith, and hung upon my cheek
Hope's rose-hued flag. There was no need to speak.
I crossed the room, and knelt by Helen. "Sing
That song you sang a fragment of one night,
Out on the porch, beginning 'Praise me not,'"
I whispered: and her sweet and plaintive tone
Rose, low and tender, as if she had caught

From some sad passing breeze, and made her own,
The echo of the wind-harp's sighing strain,
Or the soft music of the falling rain.

SONG.

O praise me not with your lips, dear one!
Though your tender words I prize.
But dearer by far is the soulful gaze
Of your eyes, your beautiful eyes,
Your tender, loving eyes.

O chide me not with your lips, dear one!
Though I cause your bosom sighs.
You can make repentance deeper far
By your sad, reproving eyes,
Your sorrowful, troubled eyes.

Words, at the best, are but hollow sounds;
Above, in the beaming skies,
The constant stars say never a word,
But only smile with their eyes—
Smile on with their lustrous eyes.

Then breathe no vow with your lips, dear one;
On the wingèd wind speech flies.
But I read the truth of your noble heart
In your soulful, speaking eyes—
In your deep and beautiful eyes.

The twilight darkened 'round us, in the room,
While Helen sang; and, in the gathering gloom,
Vivian reached out, and took my hand in his,
And held it so; while Helen made the air
Languid with music. Then a step drew near,
And voice of Aunt Ruth broke the spell:
"Dear! dear!

Why Maurie, Helen, children! how is this?
I hear you, but you have no light in there.
Your room is dark as Egypt. What a way
For folks to visit!—Maurie, go, I pray,
And order lamps."
And so there came a light,
And all the sweet dreams hovering around
The twilight shadows flitted in affright:
And e'en the music had a harsher sound.

In pleasant converse passed an hour away:
And Vivian planned a picnic for next day—
A drive the next, and rambles without end,
That he might help me entertain my friend.
And then he rose, bowed low, and passed from sight,
Like some great star that drops out from the night;
And Helen watched him through the shadows go,
And turned and said, her voice subdued and low,
"How tall he is! in all my life, Maurine,
A grander man I never yet have seen."

Part III.

One golden twelfth-part of a checkered year;
One summer month, of sunlight, moonlight, mirth,
With not a hint of shadows lurking near,
Or storm-clouds brewing.

'T was a royal day:
Voluptuous July held her lover, Earth,
With her warm arms, upon her glowing breast,
And twined herself about him, as he lay
Smiling and panting in his dream-stirred rest.
She bound him with her limbs of perfect grace,
And hid him with her trailing robe of green,
And wound him in her long hair's shimmering sheen,
And rained her ardent kisses on his face.

Through the glad glory of the summer land
Helen and I went wandering, hand in hand.
In winding paths, hard by the ripe wheat-field,
White with the promise of a bounteous yield,
Across the late shorn meadow—down the hill,
Red with the tiger-lily blossoms, till
We stood upon the borders of the lake,
That like a pretty, placid infant, slept
Low at its base: and little ripples crept
Along its surface, just as dimples chase
Each other o'er an infant's sleeping face.

Helen in idle hours had learned to make
A thousand pretty, feminine knick-knacks:
For brackets, ottomans, and toilet stands—
Labor just suited to her dainty hands.
That morning she had been at work in wax,
Molding a wreath of flowers for my room,—
Taking her patterns from the living blows,
In all their dewy beauty and sweet bloom,
Fresh from my garden. Fuchsia, tulip, rose,
And trailing ivy, grew beneath her touch,
Resembling the living plants as much
As life is copied in the form of death:
These lacking but the perfume, and that, breath.

And now the wreath was all completed, save
The mermaid blossom of all flowerdom,
A water-lily, dripping from the wave.
And 't was in search of it that we had come
Down to the lake, and wandered on the beach,
To see if any lilies grew in reach.
Some broken stalks, where flowers late had been;
Some buds, with all their beauties folded in,
We found, but not the treasure that we sought.
And then we turned our footsteps to the spot
Where, all impatient of its chain, my boat,
"The Swan," rocked, asking to be set afloat.
It was a dainty row-boat—strong, yet light;
Each side a swan was painted snowy white:
A present from my uncle, just before
He sailed, with Death, to that mysterious strand,

Where freighted ships go sailing evermore,
But none return to tell us of the land.
I freed the "Swan," and slowly rowed about,
Wherever sea-weeds, grass, or green leaves lifted
Their tips above the water. So we drifted,
While Helen, opposite, leaned idly out
And watched for lilies in the waves below,
And softly crooned some sweet and dreamy air,
That soothed me like a mother's lullabies.
I dropped the oars, and closed my sun-kissed eyes,
And let the boat go drifting here and there.
Oh, happy day! the last of that brief time
Of thoughtless youth, when all the world seems
bright,
Ere that disguised angel men call Woe
Leads the sad heart through valleys dark as night,
Up to the heights exalted and sublime.
On each blest, happy moment, I am fain
To linger long, ere I pass on to pain
And sorrow that succeeded.

From day-dreams,
As golden as the summer noontide's beams,
I was awakened by a voice that cried:
"Strange ship, ahoy! Fair frigate, whither bound?"
And, starting up, I cast my gaze around,
And saw a sail-boat o'er the water glide
Close to the "Swan," like some live thing of grace;
And from it looked the glowing, handsome face
Of Vivian.

"Beauteous sirens of the sea,
Come sail across the raging main with me!"
He laughed; and leaning, drew our drifting boat
Beside his own. "There, now! step in!" he said,
"I'll land you anywhere you want to go—
My boat is safer far than yours, I know:
And much more pleasant with its sails all spread.
The Swan? We'll take the oars, and let it float
Ashore at leisure. You, Maurine, sit there—
Miss Helen here. Ye gods and little fishes!
I've reached the height of pleasure, and my wishes.
Adieu despondency! farewell to care!"

'T was done so quickly: that was Vivian's way.
He did not wait for either yea or nay.
He gave commands, and left you with no choice
But just to do the bidding of his voice.
His rare, kind smile, low tones, and manly face
Lent to his quick imperiousness a grace
And winning charm, completely stripping it
Of what might otherwise have seemed unfit.
Leaving no trace of tyranny, but just
That nameless force that seemed to say, "You must."
Suiting its pretty title of "The Dawn,"
(So named, he said, that it might rhyme with
"Swan,")
Vivian's sail-boat, was carpeted with blue,
While all its sails were of a pale rose hue.
The daintiest craft that flirted with the breeze;
A poet's fancy in an hour of ease.

Whatever Vivian had was of the best.
His room was like some Sultan's in the East.
His board was always spread as for a feast,
Whereat, each meal, he was both host and guest.
He would go hungry sooner than he'd dine
At his own table if 't were illy set.
He so loved things artistic in design—
Order and beauty, all about him. Yet
So kind he was, if it befell his lot
To dine within the humble peasant's cot,
He made it seem his native soil to be,
And thus displayed the true gentility.

Under the rosy banners of the "Dawn,"
Around the lake we drifted on, and on.
It was a time for dreams, and not for speech.
And so we floated on in silence, each
Weaving the fancies suiting such a day.
Helen leaned idly o'er the sail-boat's side,
And dipped her rosy fingers in the tide;
And I among the cushions half reclined,
Half sat, and watched the fleecy clouds at play,
While Vivian with his blank-book, opposite,
In which he seemed to either sketch or write,
Was lost in inspiration of some kind.

No time, no change, no scene, can e'er efface
My mind's impression of that hour and place:
It stands out like a picture. O'er the years,
Black with their robes of sorrow—veiled with tears,

Lying with all their lengthened shapes between,
Untouched, undimmed, I still behold that scene.
Just as the last of Indian-summer days,
Replete with sunlight, crowned with amber haze,
Followed by dark and desolate December,
Through all the months of winter we remember.

The sun slipped westward. That peculiar change
Which creeps into the air, and speaks of night
While yet the day is full of golden light,
We felt steal o'er us.
Vivian broke the spell
Of dream-fraught silence, throwing down his book:
"Young ladies, please allow me to arrange
These wraps about your shoulders. I know well
The fickle nature of our atmosphere,—
Her smile swift followed by a frown or tear,—
And go prepared for changes. Now you look,
Like—like—oh, where's a pretty simile?
Had you a pocket mirror here you'd see
How well my native talent is displayed
In shawling you. Red on the brunette maid;
Blue on the blonde—and quite without design.
(Oh, where *is* that comparison of mine?)
Well—like a June rose and a violet blue
In one bouquet! I fancy that will do.
And now I crave your patience and a boon!
Which is to listen, while I read my rhyme,
A floating fancy of the Summer time.
'T is neither witty, wonderful, nor wise,

So listen kindly—but don't criticise
My maiden effort of the afternoon:

"If all the ships I have at sea
Should come a-sailing home to me,
Ah, well! the harbor could not hold
So many sails as there would be
If all my ships came in from sea.

"If half my ships came home from sea,
And brought their precious freight to me,
Ah, well! I should have wealth as great
As any king who sits in state—
So rich the treasures that would be
In half my ships now out at sea.

"If just one ship I have at sea
Should come a-sailing home to me,
Ah, well! the storm-clouds then might frown:
For if the others all went down
Still rich and proud and glad I'd be,
If that one ship came back to me.

"If that one ship went down at sea,
And all the others came to me,
Weighed down with gems and wealth untold,
With glory, honors, riches, gold,
The poorest soul on earth I'd be
If that one ship came not to me.

"O skies be calm! O winds blow free—
Blow all my ships safe home to me.
But if thou sendest some a-wrack
To never more come sailing back,
Send any—all, that skim the sea,
But bring my love-ship home to me."

Helen was leaning by me, and her head
Rested against my shoulder: as he read,
I stroked her hair, and watched the fleecy skies,
And when he finished, did not turn my eyes.
I felt too happy and too shy to meet
His gaze just then. I said, "'T is very sweet,
And suits the day; does it not, Helen, dear?"
But Helen, voiceless, did not seem to hear.
"'T is strange," I added, "how you poets sing
So feelingly about the very thing
You care not for! and dress up an ideal
So well, it looks a living, breathing real!
Now, to a listener, your love song seemed
A heart's out-pouring; yet I've heard you say
Almost the opposite; or that you deemed
Position, honor, glory, power, fame,
Gained without loss of conscience or good name,
The things to live for."
"Have you? Well, you may,"
Laughed Vivian, "but 't was years—or months ago!
And Solomon says wise men change, you know!
I now speak truth! if she I hold most dear
Slipped from my life, and no least hope were left,
My heart would find the years more lonely here,
Than if I were of wealth, fame, friends, bereft,
And sent an exile to a foreign land."

His voice was low, and measured: as he spoke,
New, unknown chords of melody awoke
Within my soul. I felt my heart expand

With that sweet fullness born of love. I turned
To hide the blushes on my cheek that burned,
And leaning over Helen, breathed her name.
She lay so motionless I thought she slept:
But, as I spoke, I saw her eyes unclose,
And o'er her face a sudden glory swept,
And a slight tremor thrilled all through her frame.
"Sweet friend," I said, "your face is full of light:
What were the dreams that made your eyes so
bright?"

She only smiled for answer, and arose
From her reclining posture at my side,
Threw back the clust'ring ringlets from her face
With a quick gesture, full of easy grace,
And, turning, spoke to Vivian. "Will you guide
The boat up near that little clump of green
Off to the right? There's where the lilies grow.
We quite forgot our errand here, Maurine,
And our few moments have grown into hours.
What will Aunt Ruth think of our ling'ring so?
There—that will do—now I can reach the flowers."

"Hark! just hear that!" and Vivian broke forth
singing,
"Row, brothers, row." "The six o'clock bell's ringing!
Who ever knew three hours to go so fast
In all the annals of the world, before?
I could have sworn not over one had passed.
Young ladies, I am forced to go ashore!

I thank you for the pleasure you have given;
This afternoon has been a glimpse of heaven.
Good night—sweet dreams! and by your gracious leave,
I'll pay my compliments to-morrow eve."

A smile, a bow, and he had gone his way:
And, in the waning glory of the day,
Down cool, green lanes, and through the length'ning shadows,
Silent, we wandered back across the meadows.
The wreath was finished, and adorned my room;
Long afterward, the lilies' copied bloom
Was like a horrid specter in my sight,
Staring upon me morning, noon, and night.

The sun went down. The sad new moon rose up,
And passed before me, like an empty cup,
The Great Unseen brims full of pain or bliss,
And gives His children, saying, " Drink of this."

A light wind, from the open casement, fanned
My brow and Helen's, as we, hand in hand,
Sat looking out upon the twilight scene,
In dreamy silence. Helen's dark blue eyes,
Like two lost stars that wandered from the skies
Some night adown the meteor's shining track,
And always had been grieving to go back,
Now gazed up, wistfully, at heaven's dome,
And seemed to recognize and long for home.

Her sweet voice broke the silence: "Wish, Maurine,
Before you speak! you know the moon is new,
And anything you wish for will come true
Before it wanes. I do believe the sign!
Now tell me your wish, and I'll tell you mine."

I turned and looked up at the slim young moon;
And, with an almost superstitious heart,
I sighed, "Oh, new moon! help me, by thine art,
To grow all grace and goodness, and to be
Worthy the love a true heart proffers me."
Then smiling down, I said, "Dear one! my boon,
I fear, is quite too silly or too sweet
For my repeating: so we'll let it stay
Between the moon and me. But if I may
I'll listen now to your wish. Tell me, please!"

All suddenly she nestled at my feet,
And hid her blushing face upon my knees.
Then drew my hand against her glowing cheek,
And, leaning on my breast, began to speak,
Half sighing out the words my tortured ear
Reached down to catch, while striving not to hear.

"Can you not guess who 't was about, Maurine?
Oh, my sweet friend! you must ere this have seen
The love I tried to cover from all eyes
And from myself." Ah, foolish little heart!
As well it might go seeking for some art
Whereby to hide the sun in noonday skies.

When first the strange sound of his voice I heard,
Looked on his noble face, and touched his hand,
My slumb'ring heart thrilled through and through, and stirred
As if to say, 'I hear, and understand.'
And day by day mine eyes were blest beholding
The inner beauty of his life, unfolding
In countless words and actions, that portrayed
The noble stuff of which his soul was made.
And more and more I felt my heart upreaching
Toward the truth, drawn gently by his teaching,
As flowers are drawn by sunlight. And there grew
A strange, shy something in its depths, I knew
At length was love, because it was so sad,
And yet so sweet, and made my heart so glad,
Yet seemed to pain me. Then, for very shame,
Lest all should read my secret and its name,
I strove to hide it in my breast away,
Where God could see it only. But each day
It seemed to grow within me, and would rise,
Like my own soul, and look forth from my eyes,
Defying bonds of silence; and would speak,
In its red-lettered language, on my cheek,
If but his name was uttered. You were kind,
My own Maurine! as you alone could be,
So long the sharer of my heart and mind,
While yet you saw, in seeming not to see.
In all the years we have been friends, my own,
And loved as women very rarely do,
My heart no sorrow and no joy has known

It has not shared at once, in full, with you.
And I so longed to speak to you of this,
When first I felt its mingled pain and bliss;
Yet dared not, lest you, knowing him, should say,
In pity for my folly—'Lack-a-day!
You are undone: because no mortal art
Can win the love of such a lofty heart.'
And so I waited, silent and in pain,
Till I could know I did not love in vain.
And now I know, beyond a doubt or fear.
Did he not say, 'If she I hold most dear
Slipped from my life, and no least hope were left,
My heart would find the years more lonely here
Than if I were of wealth, fame, friends, bereft,
And sent, an exile, to a foreign land'?
Oh, darling, you must *love*, to understand
The joy that thrilled all through me at those words.
It was as if a thousand singing birds
Within my heart broke forth in notes of praise.
I did not look up, but I knew his gaze
Was on my face, and that his eyes must see
The joy I felt almost transfigured me.
He loves me—loves me! so the birds kept singing.
And all my soul with that sweet strain is ringing
If there were added but one drop of bliss,
No more my cup would hold: and so, this eve,
I made a wish that I might feel his kiss
Upon my lips, ere yon pale moon should leave
The stars all lonely, having waned away,
Too old and weak and bowed with care to stay."

Her voice sighed into silence. While she spoke
My heart writhed in me, praying she would cease—
Each word she uttered falling like a stroke
On my bare soul. And now a hush like death,
Save that 't was broken by a quick-drawn breath,
Fell 'round me, but brought not the hoped-for peace.
For when the lash no longer leaves its blows,
The flesh still quivers, and the blood still flows.

She nestled on my bosom like a child.
And 'neath her head my tortured heart throbbed wild
With pain and pity. She had told her tale—
Her self-deceiving story to the end.
How could I look down on her as she lay
So fair, and sweet, and lily-like, and frail—
A tender blossom on my breast, and say,
"Nay, you are wrong—you do mistake, dear friend!
'T is I am loved, not you"? Yet that were truth,
And she must know it later.
Should I speak,
And spread a ghastly pallor o'er the cheek
Flushed now with joy?—And while I, doubting, pondered,
She spoke again. "Maurine! I oft have wondered
Why you and Vivian were not lovers. He
Is all a heart could ask its king to be;
And you have beauty, intellect and youth.
I think it strange you have not loved each other—
Strange how he could pass by you for another

Not half so fair or worthy. Yet I know
A loving Father pre-arranged it so.
I think my heart has known him all these years,
And waited for him. And if when he came
It had been as a lover of my friend,
I should have recognized him, all the same,
As my soul-mate, and loved him to the end,
Hiding my grief, and forcing back my tears
Till on my heart, slow dropping, day by day,
Unseen they fell, and wore it all away.
And so a tender Father kept him free,
With all the largeness of his love, for me—
For me, unworthy such a precious gift!
Yet I will bend each effort of my life
To grow in grace and goodness, and to lift
My soul and spirit to his lofty height,
So to deserve that holy name, his wife.
Sweet friend, it fills my whole heart with delight
To breathe its long hid secret in your ear.
Speak, my Maurine, and say you love to hear!"

The while she spoke, my active brain gave rise
To one great thought of mighty sacrifice
And self-denial. Oh! it blanched my cheek,
And wrung my soul; and from my heart it drove
All life and feeling. Coward-like, I strove
To send it from me: but I felt it cling
And hold fast on my mind like some live thing;
And all the Self within me felt its touch
And cried, "No, no! I cannot do so much—

I am not strong enough—there is no call."
And then the voice of Helen bade me speak,
And with a calmness born of nerve, I said,
Scarce knowing what I uttered, "Sweetheart, all
Your joys and sorrows are with mine own wed.
I thank you for your confidence, and pray
I may deserve it always. But, dear one,
Something—perhaps our boat-ride in the sun,
Has set my head to aching. I must go
To bed directly; and you will, I know,
Grant me your pardon, and another day
We'll talk of this together. Now good night
And angels guard you with their wings of light."

I kissed her lips, and held her on my heart,
And viewed her as I ne'er had done before.
I gazed upon her features o'er and o'er;
Marked her white, tender face—her fragile form,
Like some frail plant that withers in the storm;
Saw she was fairer in her new-found joy
Than e'er before; and thought, "Can I destroy
God's handiwork, or leave it at the best
A broken harp, while I close clasp my bliss?"
I bent my head and gave her one last kiss,
And sought my room, and found there such relief
As sad hearts feel when first alone with grief.

The moon went down, slow sailing from my sight,
And left the stars to watch away the night.
O stars, sweet stars, so changeless and serene!
What depths of woe your pitying eyes have seen!

The proud sun sets, and leaves us with our sorrow,
To grope alone in darkness till the morrow.
The languid moon, e'en if she deigns to rise,
Soon seeks her couch, grown weary of our sighs;
But from the early gloaming till the day
Sends golden-liveried heralds forth to say
He comes in might; the patient stars shine on,
Steadfast and faithful, from twilight to dawn.
And, as they shone upon Gethsemane,
And watched the struggle of a God-like soul,
Now from the same far height they shone on me,
And saw the waves of anguish o'er me roll.

The storm had come upon me all unseen:
No sound of thunder fell upon my ear;
No cloud arose to tell me it was near;
But under skies all sunlit, and serene,
I floated with the current of the stream,
And thought life all one golden-haloed dream.
When lo! a hurricane, with awful force,
Swept swift upon its devastating course,
Wrecked my frail bark, and cast me on the wave
Where all my hopes had found a sudden grave.
Love makes us blind and selfish: otherwise
I had seen Helen's secret in her eyes;
So used I was to reading every look
In her sweet face, as I would read a book.
But now, made sightless by love's blinding rays,
I had gone on unseeing, to the end
Where Pain dispelled the mist of golden haze

That walled me in, and lo! I found my friend
Who journeyed with me—at my very side,
Had been sore wounded to the heart, while I
Both deaf and blind, saw not, nor heard her cry.
And then I sobbed, "O God! I would have died
To save her this." And as I cried in pain,
There leaped forth from the still, white realm of Thought
Where Conscience dwells, that unimpassioned spot
As widely different from the heart's domain
As north from south—the impulse felt before,
And put away; but now it rose once more,
In greater strength, and said, "Heart, would'st thou prove
What lips have uttered? Then go lay thy love
On Friendship's altar, as thy offering."
"Nay!" cried my heart, "ask any other thing—
Ask life itself—'t were easier sacrifice.
But ask not love, for that I cannot give."

"But," spoke the voice, "the meanest insect dies,
And is no hero! heroes dare to live
When all that makes life sweet is snatched away."
So with my heart, in converse, till the day
In gold and crimson billows, rose and broke,
The voice of Conscience, all unwearied, spoke.
Love warred with Friendship: heart with Conscience fought,
Hours rolled away, and yet the end was not.

And wily Self, tricked out like tenderness,
Sighed, "Think how one, whose life thou wert to
bless,
Will be cast down, and grope in doubt and fear!
Wouldst thou wound him, to give thy friend relief?
Can wrong make right?"
"Nay!" Conscience said, "but Pride
And Time can heal the saddest hurts of Love.
While Friendship's wounds gape wide and yet more
wide,
And bitter fountains of the spirit prove."

At length, exhausted with the wearing strife,
I cast the new-found burden of my life
On God's broad breast, and sought that deep repose
That only he who watched with sorrow knows.

Part IV.

"Maurine, Maurine! 'tis ten o'clock! arise,
My pretty sluggard! open those dark eyes,
And see where yonder sun is! Do you know
I made my toilet just four hours ago?"

'T was Helen's voice: and Helen's gentle kiss
Fell on my cheek. As from a deep abyss,
I drew my weary self from that strange sleep
That rests not, nor refreshes. Scarce awake
Or conscious, yet there seemed a heavy weight
Bound on my breast, as by a cruel Fate.
I knew not why, and yet I longed to weep.
Some dark cloud seemed to hang upon the day;
And, for a moment, in that trance I lay,
When suddenly the truth did o'er me break,
Like some great wave upon a helpless child.
The dull pain in my breast grew like a knife—
The heavy throbbing of my heart grew wild,
And God gave back the burden of the life
He kept what time I slumbered.
"You are ill,"
Cried Helen, "with that blinding headache still!
You look so pale and weary. Now let me
Play nurse, Maurine, and care for you to-day!
And first I'll suit some dainty to your taste,
And bring it to you, with a cup of tea."
And off she ran, not waiting my reply.

But, wanting most the sunshine and the light,
I left my couch, and clothed myself in haste,
And, kneeling, sent to God an earnest cry
For help and guidance.
"Show Thou me the way,
Where duty leads; for I am blind! my sight
Obscured by self. Oh, lead my steps aright!
Help me see the path: and if it may,
Let this cup pass:—and yet Thou heavenly One
Thy will in all things, not mine own, be done."
Rising, I went upon my way, receiving
The strength prayer gives alway to hearts believing.
I felt that unseen hands were leading me,
And knew the end was peace.
"What! are you up?"
Cried Helen, coming with a tray, and cup,
Of tender toast, and fragrant smoking tea.
"You naughty girl! you should have stayed in bed
Until you ate your breakfast, and were better?
I've something hidden for you here—a letter.
But drink your tea before you read it, dear!
'Tis from some distant cousin, Auntie said,
And so you need not hurry. Now be good,
And mind your Helen."
So, in passive mood,
I laid the still unopened letter near,
And loitered at my breakfast more to please
My nurse, than any hunger to appease.
Then listlessly I broke the seal and read
The few lines written in a bold free hand:

"New London, Canada. Dear Coz. Maurine!
(In spite of generations stretched between
Our natural right to that most handy claim
Of cousinship, we'll use it all the same)
I'm coming to see you! honestly, in truth!
I've threatened often—now I mean to act.
You'll find my coming is a stubborn fact.
Keep quiet though, and do not tell Aunt Ruth.
I wonder if she'll know her petted boy
In spite of changes. Look for me until
You see me coming. As of old I'm still
Your faithful friend, and loving cousin, Roy."

So Roy was coming! He and I had played
As boy and girl, and later, youth and maid,
Full half our lives together. He had been,
Like me, an orphan; and the roof of kin
Gave both kind shelter. Swift years sped away
Ere change was felt: and then one summer day
A long lost uncle sailed from India's shore—
Made Roy his heir, and he was ours no more.

"He'd write us daily, and we'd see his face
Once every year." Such was his promise given
The morn he left. But now the years were seven
Since last he looked upon the olden place.
He'd been through college, traveled in all lands,
Sailed over seas, and trod the desert sands.
Would write and plan a visit, then, ere long,
Would write again from Egypt or Hong Kong—

Some fancy called him thither unforeseen.
So years had passed, till seven lay between
His going and the coming of this note,
Which I hid in my bosom, and replied
To Aunt Ruth's queries, "What the truant wrote?"
By saying he was still upon the wing,
And merely dropped a line, while journeying,
To say he lived: and she was satisfied.

Sometimes it happens, in this world so strange,
A human heart will pass through mortal strife,
And writhe in torture: while the old sweet life
So full of hope, and beauty, bloom and grace,
Is slowly strangled by remorseless Pain:
And one stern, cold, relentless, takes its place—
A ghastly, pallid specter of the slain.
Yet those in daily converse see no change
Nor dream the heart has suffered.
So that day
I passed along toward the troubled way
Stern duty pointed, and no mortal guessed
A mighty conflict had disturbed my breast.

I had resolved to yield up to my friend
The man I loved. Since she, too, loved him so
I saw no other way in honor left.
She was so weak and fragile, once bereft
Of this great hope, that held her with such power.
She would wilt down, like some frost-bitten flower,
And swift untimely death would be the end.

But I was strong: and hardy plants, which grow
In out-door soil, can bear bleak winds that blow
From Arctic lands, whereof a single breath
Would lay the hot-house blossom low in death.

The hours went by, too slow, and yet too fast.
All day I argued with my foolish heart
That bade me play the shrinking coward's part
And hide from pain. And when the day had past
And time for Vivian's call drew near and nearer,
It pleaded, "Wait, until the way seems clearer:
Say you are ill—or busy: keep away
Until you gather strength enough to play
The part you have resolved on."

"Nay, not so,"
Made answer clear-eyed Reason, "Do you go
And put your resolution to the test.
Resolve, however nobly formed, at best
Is but a still-born babe of Thought, until
It proves existence of its life and will
By sound or action."
So when Helen came
And knelt by me, her fair face all aflame
With sudden blushes, whispering, "My sweet!
My heart can hear the music of his feet—
Go down with me to meet him," I arose,
And went with her all calmly, as one goes
To look upon the dear face of the dead.

That eve, I know not what I did or said.
I was not cold—my manner was not strange:
Perchance I talked more freely than my wont,
But in my speech was naught could give affront;
Yet I conveyed, as only woman can,
That nameless *something*, which bespeaks a change.

'T is in the power of woman, if she be
Whole-souled and noble, free from coquetry—
Her motives all unselfish, worthy, good,
To make herself and feelings understood
By nameless acts—thus sparing what to man,
However gently answered, causes pain,
The offering of his hand and heart in vain.

She can be friendly, unrestrained, and kind,
Assume no airs of pride or arrogance;
But in her voice, her manner, and her glance,
Convey that mystic something, undefined,
Which men fail not to understand and read,
And, when not blind with egoism, heed.
My task was harder. 'T was the slow undoing
Of long sweet months of unimpeded wooing.
It was to hide and cover and conceal
The truth—assuming, what I did not feel.
It was to dam love's happy singing tide
That blessed me with its hopeful, tuneful tone,
By feigned indiff'rence, till it turned aside,
And changed its channel, leaving me alone
To walk parched plains, and thirst for that sweet draught
My lips had tasted, but another quaffed.

It could be done. For no words yet were spoken—
None to recall—no pledges to be broken.
"He will be grieved, then angry, cold, then cross,"
I reasoned, thinking what would be his part
In this strange drama. "Then, because his heart
Feels something lacking, to make good his loss,
He'll turn to Helen: and her gentle grace
And loving acts will win her soon the place
I hold to-day: and like a troubled dream
At length, our past, when he looks back, will
seem."

That evening passed with music, chat and song:
But hours that once had flown on airy wings
Now limped on weary, aching limbs along,
Each moment like some dreaded step that brings
A twinge of pain.
As Vivian rose to go,
Slow bending to me, from his greater height,
He took my hand, and, looking in my eyes,
With tender questioning and pained surprise,
Said, "Maurine, you are not yourself to-night!
What is it? Are you ailing?"
"Ailing? no,"
I answered, laughing lightly, "I am not:
Just see my cheek, sir! is it thin, or pale?
Now tell me, am I looking very frail?"
"Nay, nay!" he answered, "it can not be *seen*,
The change I speak of—'twas more in your mien:
Preoccupation, or—I know not what!
Miss Helen, am I wrong, or does Maurine
Seem to have something on her mind this eve?"

'She does?" laughed Helen, "and I do believe
I know what 't is! A letter came to-day
Which she read slyly, and then hid away
Close to her heart, not knowing I was near:
And since she's been as you have seen her here.
See how she blushes! so my random shot
We must believe has struck a tender spot."

Her rippling laughter floated through the room,
And redder yet I felt the hot blood rise,
Then surge away to leave me pale as death,
Under the dark and swiftly gathering gloom
Of Vivian's questioning, accusing eyes,
That searched my soul. I almost shrieked beneath
That stern, fixed gaze; and stood spell-bound until
He turned with sudden movement, gave his hand
To each in turn, and said, "You must not stand
Longer, young ladies, in this open door.
The air is heavy with a cold damp chill.
We shall have rain to-morrow, or before.
Good night."
He vanished in the darkling shade;
And so the dreaded evening found an end,
That saw me grasp the conscience-whetted blade,
And strike a blow for honor and for friend.

"How swiftly passed the evening!" Helen sighed.
"How long the hours!" my tortured heart replied.
Joy, like a child, with lightsome steps doth glide
By Father Time, and, looking in his face,
Cries, snatching blossoms from the fair road-side,
"I could pluck more, but for thy hurried pace."

The while her elder brother Pain, man grown,
Whose feet are hurt by many a thorn and stone,
Looks to some distant hill-top, high and calm,
Where he shall find not only rest, but balm
For all his wounds, and cries in tones of woe,
"O Father Time! why is thy pace so slow?"

Two days, all sad with lonely wind and rain,
Went sobbing by, repeating o'er and o'er
The miserere, desolate and drear,
Which every human heart must sometime hear.
Pain is but little varied. Its refrain,
Whate'er the words are, is for aye the same.
The third day brought a change: for with it came
Not only sunny smiles to Nature's face,
But Roy, our Roy came back to us. Once more
We looked into his laughing, handsome eyes,
Which, while they gave Aunt Ruth a glad surprise
In no way puzzled her: for one glance told
What each succeeding one confirmed, that he
Who bent above her with the lissome grace
Of his fine form, though grown so tall, could be
No other than the Roy Montaine of old.

It was a sweet reunion: and he brought
So much of sunshine with him, that I caught,
Just from his smile alone, enough of gladness
To make my heart forget a time its sadness.
We talked together of the dear old days:
Leaving the present, with its depths and heights
Of life's maturer sorrows and delights

I turned back to my childhood's level land,
And Roy and I, dear playmates, hand in hand,
Wandered in mem'ry, through the olden ways.

It was the second evening of his coming.
Helen was playing dreamily, and humming
Some wordless melody of white-souled thought,
While Roy and I sat by the open door,
Re-living childish incidents of yore.
My eyes were glowing, and my cheeks were hot
With warm young blood; excitement, joy, or pain
Alike would send swift coursing through each vein.
Roy, always eloquent, was waxing fine,
And bringing vividly before my gaze
Some old adventure of those halcyon days,
When suddenly in pauses of the talk,
I heard a well-known step upon the walk,
And looked up quickly to meet full in mine
The eyes of Vivian Dangerfield. A flash
Shot from their depths:—a sudden blaze of light
Like that swift followed by the thunder's crash,
Which said, "Suspicion is confirmed by sight,"
As they fell on the pleasant door-way scene.
Then o'er his clear-cut face, a cold white look
Crept, like the pallid moonlight o'er a brook,
And, with a slight, proud bending of the head,
He stepped toward us haughtily and said,
"Please pardon my intrusion, Miss Maurine:
I called to ask Miss Trevor for a book
She spoke of lending me: nay, sit you still!
And I, by grant of your permission, will

Pass by to where I hear her playing."
"Stay!"
I said, "one moment, Vivian, if you please;"
And suddenly bereft of all my ease,
And scarcely knowing what to do, or say,
Confused as any school-girl, I arose,
And some way made each to the other known.
They bowed, shook hands: then Vivian turned away
And sought out Helen, leaving us alone.

"One of Miss Trevor's, or of Maurine's beaux?
Which may he be, who cometh like a prince
With haughty bearing, and an eagle eye?"
Roy queried, laughing: and I answered, "Since
You saw him pass me for Miss Trevor's side,
I leave your own good judgment to reply."

And straightway caused the tide of talk to glide
In other channels, striving to dispel
The sudden gloom that o'er my spirit fell.

We mortals are such hypocrites at best!
When Conscience tries our courage with a test,
And points to some steep pathway, we set out
Boldly, denying any fear or doubt;
But pause before the first rock in the way,
And, looking back, with tears, at Conscience, say,
"We are so sad, dear Conscience! for we would
Most gladly do what to thee seemeth good;
But lo! this rock! we cannot climb it, so
Thou must point out some other way to go."

Yet secretly we are rejoicing: and,
When right before our faces, as we stand
In seeming grief, the rock is cleft in twain,
Leaving the pathway clear, we shrink in pain!
And loth to go, by every act reveal
What we so tried from Conscience to conceal.

I saw that hour, the way made plain, to do
With scarce an effort, what had seemed a strife
That would require the strength of my whole life.

Women have quick perceptions: and I knew
That Vivian's heart was full of jealous pain,
Suspecting—nay *believing* Roy Montaine
To be my lover. First my altered mien—
And next the letter—then the door-way scene—
My flushed face gazing in the one above
That bent so near me, and my strange confusion
When Vivian came, all led to one conclusion:
That I had but been playing with his love,
As women sometimes cruelly do play
With hearts when their true lovers are away.

There could be nothing easier, than just
To let him linger on in this belief
Till hourly-fed Suspicion and Distrust
Should turn to scorn and anger all his grief.
Compared with me, so doubly sweet and pure
Would Helen seem, my purpose would be sure,
And certain of completion in the end.
But now, the way was made so straight and clear,
My coward heart shrank back in guilty fear,

Till Conscience whispered with her "still small
voice,"
"The precious time is passing—make thy choice—
Resign thy love, or slay thy trusting friend."

The growing moon, watched by the myriad eyes
Of countless stars, went sailing through the skies,
Like some young prince, rising to rule a nation,
To whom all eyes are turned in expectation.
A woman who possesses tact and art
And strength of will can take the hand of doom,
And walk on, smiling sweetly as she goes,
With rosy lips, and rounded cheeks of bloom,
Cheating a loud-tongued world that never knows
The pain and sorrow of her hidden heart.
And so I joined in Roy's bright changing chat;
Answered his sallies—talked of this and that,
My brow unruffled as the calm still wave
That tells not of the wrecked ship, and the grave
Beneath its surface.
Then we heard, ere long,
The sound of Helen's gentle voice in song,
And, rising, entered where the subtle power
Of Vivian's eyes, forgiving while accusing,
Finding me weak, had won me, in that hour;
But Roy, alway polite and debonair
Where ladies were, now hung about my chair
With nameless delicate attentions, using
That air devotional, and those small arts
Acquaintance with society imparts
To men gallant by nature.

'T was my sex
And not myself he bowed to. Had my place
Been filled that evening by a dowager,
Twice his own age, he would have given her
The same attentions. But they served to vex
Whatever hope in Vivian's heart remained.
The cold, white look crept back upon his face,
Which told how deeply he was hurt and pained.

Little by little all things had conspired,
To bring events I dreaded, yet desired.
We were in constant intercourse: walks, rides,
Picnics and sails, filled weeks of golden weather,
And almost hourly we were thrown together.
No words were spoken of rebuke or scorn:
Good friends we seemed. But as a gulf divides
This land and that, though lying side by side,
So rolled a gulf between us—deep and wide—
The gulf of doubt, which widened slowly morn
And noon and night.
Free and informal were
These picnics and excursions. Yet, although
Helen and I would sometimes choose to go
Without our escorts, leaving them quite free,
It happened alway Roy would seek out me
Ere passed the day, while Vivian walked with her.
I had no thought of flirting. Roy was just
Like some dear brother, and I quite forgot
The kinship was so distant it was not
Safe to rely upon in perfect trust,

Without reserve or caution. Many a time
When there was some steep mountain side to climb,
And I grew weary, he would say, "Maurine,
Come rest you here." And I would go and lean
My head upon his shoulder, or would stand
And let him hold in his my willing hand,
The while he stroked it gently with his own.
Or I would let him clasp me with his arm,
Nor entertained a thought of any harm,
Nor once supposed but Vivian was alone
In his suspicions. But ere long the truth
I learned in consternation! both Aunt Ruth
And Helen, honestly, in faith believed
That Roy and I were lovers.
Undeceived,
Some careless words might open Vivian's eyes
And spoil my plans. So, reasoning in this wise,
To all their sallies I in jest replied,
To naught assented, and yet naught denied,
With Roy unchanged remaining, confident
Each understood just what the other meant.

If I grew weary of this double part,
And self-imposed deception caused my heart
Sometimes to shrink, I needed but to gaze
On Helen's face: that wore a look ethereal,
As if she dwelt above the things material
And held communion with the angels. So
I fed my strength and courage through the days.

What time the harvest moon rose full and clear
And cast its ling'ring radiance on the earth,
We made a feast; and called from far and near,
Our friends, who came to share the scene of mirth.
Fair forms and faces flitted to and fro;
But none more sweet than Helen's. Robed in white,
She floated like a vision through the dance.
So frailly fragile and so phantom fair,
She seemed like some stray spirit of the air,
And was pursued by many an anxious glance
That looked to see her fading from the sight
Like figures that a dreamer sees at night.

And noble men and gallants graced the scene:
Yet none more noble or more grand of mien
Than Vivian—broad of chest and shoulder, tall
And finely formed, as any Grecian god
Whose high-arched foot on Mount Olympus trod.
His clear-cut face was beardless; and, like those
Same Grecian statues, when in calm repose,
Was it in hue and feature. Framed in hair
Dark and abundant; lighted by large eyes
That could be cold as steel in winter air,
Or warm and sunny as Italian skies.

Weary of mirth and music, and the sound
Of tripping feet, I sought a moment's rest
Within the lib'ry, where a group I found
Of guests, discussing with apparent zest
Some theme of interest—Vivian, near the while,
Leaning and listening with his slow odd smile.

"Now Miss La Pelle, we will appeal to you,"
Cried young Guy Semple, as I entered. "We
Have been discussing right before his face,
All unrebuked by him, as you may see,
A poem lately published by our friend:
And we are quite divided. I contend
The poem is a libel and untrue.
I hold the fickle women are but few,
Compared with those who are like you fair moon
That, ever faithful, rises in her place
Whether she's greeted by the flowers of June,
Or cold and dreary stretches of white space."

"Oh!" cried another, "Mr. Dangerfield,
Look to your laurels! or you needs must yield
The crown to Semple, who, 't is very plain,
Has mounted Pegasus and grasped his mane."

All laughed: and then, as Guy appealed to me
I answered lightly, "My young friend, I fear
You chose a most unlucky simile
To prove the truth of woman. To her place
The moon does rise—but with a different face
Each time she comes. But now I needs must hear
The poem read, before I can consent
To pass my judgment on the sentiment."

All clamored that the author was the man
To read the poem: and, with tones that said
More than the cutting, scornful words he read;
Taking the book Guy gave him, he began:

HER LOVE.

The sands upon the ocean side
That change about with every tide,
And never true to one abide,
A woman's love I liken to.

The summer zephyrs, light and vain,
That sing the same alluring strain
To every grass blade on the plain—
A woman's love is nothing more.

The sunshine of an April day
That comes to warm you with its ray,
But while you smile has flown away—
A woman's love is like to this.

God made poor woman with no heart,
But gave her skill, and tact, and art,
And so she lives, and plays her part.
We must not blame, but pity her.

She leans to man—but just to hear
The praise he whispers in her ear,
Herself, not him, she holdeth dear—
O fool! to be deceived by her.

To sate her selfish thirst she quaffs
The love of strong hearts in sweet draughts
Then throws them lightly by and laughs,
Too weak to understand their pain.

As changeful as the winds that blow
From every region, to and fro,
Devoid of heart, she cannot know
The suffering of a human heart.

I knew the cold, fixed gaze of Vivian's eyes
Saw the slow color to my forehead rise;
But lightly answered, toying with my fan,
"That sentiment is very like a man!
Men call us fickle, but they do us wrong;
We're only frail and helpless, men are strong;
And when love dies, they take the poor dead thing
And make a shroud out of their suffering,
And drag the corpse about with them for years.
But we?—we mourn it for a day with tears!
And then we robe it for its last long rest,
And being women, feeble things at best,
We cannot dig the grave ourselves. And so
We call strong-limbed New Love to lay it low:
Immortal sexton he! whom Venus sends
To do this service for her earthly friends.
The trusty fellow digs the grave so deep
Nothing disturbs the dead laid there to sleep."

The laugh that followed had not died away
Ere Roy Montaine came seeking me, to say
The band was tuning for our waltz, and so
Back to the ball-room bore me. In the glow
And heat and whirl, my strength ere long was spent,
And I grew faint and dizzy, and we went
Out on the cool moonlighted portico,
And, sitting there, Roy drew my languid head
Upon the shelter of his breast, and bent
His smiling eyes upon me, as he said,
"I'll try the mesmerism of my touch

To work a cure: be very quiet now,
And let me make some passes o'er your brow.
Why, how it throbs! you've exercised too much!
I shall not let you dance again to-night."

Just then before us, in the broad moonlight,
Two forms were mirrored: and I turned my face
To catch the teasing and mischievous glance
Of Helen's eyes, as, heated by the dance,
Leaning on Vivian's arm, she sought this place.

"I beg your pardon," came in that round tone
Of his low voice. "I think we do intrude."
Bowing, they turned, and left us quite alone
Ere I could speak, or change my attitude.

Part V.

A visit to a cave some miles away
Was next in order. So, one sunny day,
Four prancing steeds conveyed a laughing load
Of merry pleasure-seekers o'er the road.
A basket picnic, music and croquet
Were in the programme. Skies were blue and clear,
And cool winds whispered of the Autumn near.
The merry-makers filled the time with pleasure;
Some floated to the music's rhythmic measure.
Some played, some promenaded on the green.

Ticked off by happy hearts, the moments passed.
The afternoon, all glow and glimmer, came.
Helen and Roy were leaders of some game,
And Vivian was not visible.
"Maurine,
I challenge you to climb yon cliff with me!
And who shall tire, or reach the summit last
Must pay a forfeit," cried a romping maid.
"Come! start at once, or own you are afraid."
So challenged I made ready for the race,
Deciding first the forfeit was to be
A handsome pair of bootees to replace
The victor's loss who made the rough ascent.
The cliff was steep and stony. On we went
As eagerly as if the path was Fame,
And what we climbed for, glory and a name.

My hands were bruised; my garments sadly rent,
But on I clambered. Soon I heard a cry,
"Maurine! Maurine! my strength is wholly spent!
You've won the boots! I'm going back—good-by!"
And back she turned, in spite of laugh and jeer.

I reached the summit: and its solitude,
Wherein no living creature did intrude,
Save some sad birds that wheeled and circled near,
I found far sweeter than the scene below.
Alone with One who knew my hidden woe,
I did not feel so much alone as when
I mixed with th' unthinking throngs of men.

Some flowers that decked the barren, sterile place
I plucked, and read the lesson they conveyed,
That in our lives, albeit dark with shade
And rough and hard with labor, yet may grow
The flowers of Patience, Sympathy, and Grace.

As I walked on in meditative thought,
A serpent writhed across my pathway; not
A large or deadly serpent; yet the sight
Filled me with ghastly terror and affright.
I shrieked aloud: a darkness veiled my eyes—
And I fell fainting 'neath the watchful skies.

I was no coward. Country-bred and born,
I had no feeling but the keenest scorn
For those fine lady "ah's" and "oh's" of fear
So much assumed (when any man is near).

But God implanted in each human heart
A natural horror, and a sickly dread
Of that accursèd, slimy, creeping thing
That squirms a limbless carcass o'er the ground.
And where that inborn loathing is not found
You'll find the serpent-qualities instead.
Who fears it not, himself is next of kin,
And in his bosom holds some treacherous art
Whereby to counteract its venomed sting.
And all are sired by Satan—Chief of Sin.

Who loathes not that foul creature of the dust,
However fair in seeming, I distrust.

I woke from my unconsciousness, to know
I leaned upon a broad and manly breast,
And Vivian's voice was speaking, soft and low,
Sweet whispered words of passion, o'er and o'er.
I dared not breathe. Had I found Eden's shore?
Was this a foretaste of eternal bliss?
"My love," he sighed, his voice like winds that moan
Before a rain in Summer time, "My own,
For one sweet stolen moment, lie and rest
Upon this heart that loves and hates you both!
O fair false face! Why were you made so fair!
O mouth of Southern sweetness! that ripe kiss
That hangs upon you, I do take an oath
His lips shall never gather. There!—and there!
I steal it from him. Are you his—all his?

Nay you are mine, this moment, as I dreamed—
Blind fool—believing you were what you seemed—
You would be mine in all the years to come.
Fair fiend! I love and hate you in a breath.
O God! if this white pallor were but *death*,
And I were stretched beside you, cold and dumb,
My arms about you, so—in fond embrace!
My lips pressed, so—upon your dying face!"

"Woman, how dare you bring me to such shame!
How dare you drive me to an act like this,
To steal from your unconscious lips the kiss
You lured me on to think my rightful claim!
O frail and puny woman! could you know
The devil that you waken in the hearts
You snare and bind in your enticing arts,
The thin, pale stuff that in your veins doth flow
Would freeze in terror.
Strange you have such power
To please, or pain us, poor, weak, soulless things—
Devoid of passion as a senseless flower!
Like butterflies, your only boast, your wings.
There, now, I scorn you—scorn you from this hour,
And hate myself for having talked of love!"

He pushed me from him. And I felt as those
Doomed angels must, when pearly gates above
Are closed against them.
With a feigned surprise
I started up and opened wide my eyes,
And looked about. Then in confusion rose
And stood before him.

"Pardon me, I pray!"
He said quite coldly. "Half an hour ago
I left you with the company below,
And sought this cliff. A moment since you cried,
It seemed, in sudden terror and alarm.
I came in time to see you swoon away.
You'll need assistance down the rugged side
Of this steep cliff. I pray you take my arm."

So, formal and constrained, we passed along,
Rejoined our friends, and mingled with the throng
To have no further speech again that day.

Next morn there came a bulky document,
The legal firm of Blank & Blank had sent,
Containing news unlooked for. An estate
Which proved a cosy fortune—no-wise great
Or princely—had in France been left to me,
My grandsire's last descendant. And it brought
A sense of joy and freedom in the thought
Of foreign travel, which I hoped would be
A panacea for my troubled mind,
That longed to leave the olden scenes behind
With all their recollections, and to flee
To some strange country.
I was in such haste
To put between me and my native land
The briny ocean's desolating waste,
I gave Aunt Ruth no peace, until she planned
To sail that week, two months: though she was fain
To wait until the Springtime. Roy Montaine
Would be our guide and escort.

No one dreamed
The cause of my strange hurry, but all seemed
To think good fortune had quite turned my brain.
One bright October morning, when the woods
Had donned their purple mantles and red hoods
In honor of the Frost King, Vivian came,
Bringing some green leaves, tipped with crimson
flame,—
First trophies of the Autumn time.
And Roy
Made a proposal that we all should go
And ramble in the forest for a while.
But Helen said she was not well—and so
Must stay at home. Then Vivian, with a smile,
Responded, "I will stay and talk to you,
And they may go;" at which her two cheeks grew
Like twin blush roses;—dyed with love's red wave,
Her fair face shone transfigured with great joy.

And Vivian saw—and suddenly was grave.

Roy took my arm in that protecting way
Peculiar to some men, which seems to say,
"I shield my own," a manner pleasing, e'en
When we are conscious that it does not mean
More than a simple courtesy. A woman
Whose heart is wholly feminine and human,
And not unsexed by hobbies, likes to be
The object of that tender chivalry,—
That guardianship which man bestows on her,
Yet mixed with deference; as if she were
Half child, half angel.

Though she may be strong,
Noble and self-reliant, not afraid
To raise her hand and voice against all wrong
And all oppression, yet if she be made,
With all the independence of her thought,
A woman womanly, as God designed,
Albeit she may have as great a mind
As man, her brother, yet his strength of arm,
His muscle and his boldness she has not,
And cannot have without she loses what
Is far more precious, modesty and grace.
So, walking on in her appointed place,
She does not strive to ape him, nor pretend
But that she needs him for a guide and friend,
To shield her with his greater strength from harm.

We reached the forest; wandered to and fro
Through many a winding path and dim retreat,
Till I grew weary: when I chose a seat
Upon an oak tree, which had been laid low
By some wind storm, or by some lightning stroke.
And Roy stood just below me, where the ledge
On which I sat sloped steeply to the edge
Of sunny meadows lying at my feet.
One hand held mine; the other grasped a limb
That cast its checkered shadows over him;
And, with his head thrown back, his dark eyes raised
And fixed upon me, silently he gazed
Until I, smiling, turned to him and spoke:
"Give words, my cousin, to those thoughts that rise,
And, like dumb spirits, look forth from your eyes."

The smooth and even darkness of his cheek
Was stained one moment by a flush of red.
He swayed his lithe form nearer as he stood
Still clinging to the branch above his head.
His brilliant eyes grew darker; and he said,
With sudden passion, "Do you bid me speak?
I can not, then, keep silence if I would.
That hateful fortune, coming as it did,
Forbade my speaking sooner; for I knew
A harsh-tongued world would quickly misconstrue
My motive for a meaner one. But, sweet,
So big my heart has grown with love for you
I can not shelter it, or keep it hid.
And so I cast it throbbing at your feet,
For you to guard and cherish, or to break.
Maurine, I love you better than my life.
My friend—my cousin—be still more, my wife!
Maurine, Maurine, what answer do you make?"

I scarce could breathe for wonderment; and numb
With truth that fell too suddenly, sat dumb
With sheer amaze, and stared at Roy with eyes
That looked no feeling but complete surprise.
He swayed so near his breath was on my cheek.
"Maurine, Maurine," he whispered, "will you speak?"

Then suddenly, as o'er some magic glass
One picture in a score of shapes will pass,
I seemed to see Roy glide before my gaze.
First, as the playmate of my earlier days—

Next, as my kin—and then my valued friend,
And last, my lover. As when colors blend
In some unlooked-for group before our eyes,
We hold the glass, and look them o'er and o'er
So now I gazed on Roy in his new guise,
In which he ne'er appeared to me before.

His form was like a panther's in its grace,
So lithe and supple, and of medium height,
And garbed in all the elegance of fashion.
His large black eyes were full of fire and passion,
And in expression fearless, firm, and bright.
His hair was like the very deeps of night,
And hung in raven clusters 'round a face
Of dark and flashing beauty.
He was more
Like some romantic maiden's grand ideal
Than like a common being. As I gazed
Upon the handsome face to mine upraised,
I saw before me, living, breathing, real,
The hero of my early day-dreams: though
So full my heart was with that clear-cut face,
Which, all unlike, yet claimed the hero's place,
I had not recognized him so before,
Or thought of him, save as a valued friend.
So now I called him, adding,
"Foolish boy!
Each word of love you utter aims a blow
At that sweet trust I had reposed in you.
I was so certain I had found a true,

Steadfast man friend, on whom I could depend,
And go on wholly trusting, to the end.
Why did you shatter my delusion, Roy,
By turning to a lover?"
"Why, indeed!
Because I loved you more than any brother,
Or any friend could love." Then he began
To argue like a lawyer, and to plead
With all his eloquence. And, listening,
I strove to think it was a goodly thing
To be so fondly loved by such a man,
And it were best to give his wooing heed,
And not deny him. Then before my eyes
In all its clear-cut majesty, that other
Haughty and poet-handsome face would rise
And rob my purpose of all life and strength.

Roy urged and argued, as Roy only could,
With that impetuous, boyish eloquence.
He held my hands, and vowed I must, and should
Give some least hope; till, in my own defense,
I turned upon him, and replied at length:
"I thank you for the noble heart you offer:
But it deserves a true one in exchange.
I could love you if I loved not another
Who keeps my heart; so I have none to proffer."

Then, seeing how his dark eyes flashed, I said,
"Dear Roy! I know my words seem very strange;
But I love one I cannot hope to wed.
A river rolls between us, dark and deep.

To cross it—were to stain with blood my hand.
You force my speech on what I fain would keep
In my own bosom, but you understand?
My heart is given to love that's sanctified,
And now can feel no other.
Be you kind
Dear Roy, my brother! speak of this no more,
Lest pleading and denying should divide
The hearts so long united. Let me find
In you my cousin and my friend of yore
And now come home. The morning, all too soon
And unperceived, has melted into noon.
Helen will miss us, and we must return."

He took my hand, and helped me to arise,
Smiling upon me with his sad dark eyes,
Where passion's fires had, sudden, ceased to burn.

"And so," he said, "too soon and unforeseen
My friendship melted into love, Maurine.
But, sweet! I am not wholly in the blame,
For what you term my folly. You forgot,
So long we'd known each other, I had not
In truth a brother's or a cousin's claim.
But I remembered, when through every nerve
Your lightest touch went thrilling; and began
To love you with that human love of man
For comely woman. By your coaxing arts,
You won your way into my heart of hearts,
And all Platonic feelings put to rout.
A maid should never lay aside reserve

With one who's not her kinsman, out and out.
But as we now, with measured steps, retrace
The path we came, e'en so my heart I'll send,
At your command, back to the olden place,
And strive to love you only as a friend."
I felt the justice of his mild reproof,
But answered laughing, "'T is the same old cry:
'The woman tempted me, and I did eat.'
Since Adam's time we've heard it. But I'll try
And be more prudent, sir, and hold aloof
The fruit I never once had thought so sweet
'T would tempt you any. Now go dress for dinner,
Thou sinned against! as also will the sinner.
And guard each act, that no least look betray
What's passed between us."
Then I turned away
And sought my room, low humming some old air
That ceased upon the threshold; for mine eyes
Fell on a face so glorified and fair
All other senses, merged in that of sight,
Were lost in contemplation of the bright
And wond'rous picture, which had otherwise
Made dim my vision.
Waiting in my room,
Her whole face lit as by an inward flame
That shed its halo 'round her, Helen stood;
Her fair hands folded like a lily's leaves
Weighed down by happy dews of summer eves.
Upon her cheek the color went and came
As sunlight flickers o'er a bed of bloom;

And, like some slim young sapling of the wood,
Her slender form leaned slightly; and her hair
Fell 'round her loosely, in long curling strands
All unconfined, and as by loving hands
Tossed into bright confusion.
Standing there,
Her starry eyes uplifted, she did seem
Like some unearthly creature of a dream;
Until she started forward, gliding slowly,
And broke the breathless silence, speaking lowly,
As one grown meek, and humble in an hour,
Bowing before some new and mighty power.

"Maurine, Maurine!" she murmured, and again,
"Maurine, my own sweet friend, Maurine!"
And then,
Laying her love light hands upon my head,
She leaned, and looked into my eyes, and said
With voice that bore her joy in ev'ry tone,
As winds that blow across a garden bed
Are weighed with fragrance, "He is mine alone,
And I am his—all his—his very own.
So pledged this hour, by that most sacred tie
Save one beneath God's over-arching sky.
I could not wait to tell you of my bliss:
I want your blessing, sweetheart! and your kiss."
So hiding my heart's trouble with a smile,
I leaned and kissed her dainty mouth; the while
I felt a guilt-joy, as of some sweet sin,
When my lips fell where his so late had been.

And all day long I bore about with me
A sense of shame—yet mixed with satisfaction,
As some starved child might steal a loaf, and be
Sad with the guilt resulting from her action,
While yet the morsel in her mouth was sweet.
That ev'ning when the house had settled down
To sleep and quiet, to my room there crept
A lithe young form, robed in a long white gown:
With steps like fall of thistle-down she came,
Her mouth smile-wreathed; and, breathing low my
name,
Nestled in graceful beauty at my feet.

"Sweetheart," she murmured softly, "ere I sleep,
I needs must tell you all my tale of joy.
Beginning where you left us—you and Roy.
You saw the color flame upon my cheek
When Vivian spoke of staying. So did he;—
And, when we were alone, he gazed at me
With such a strange look in his wond'rous eyes.
The silence deepened; and I tried to speak
Upon some common topic, but could not,
My heart was in such tumult.
In this wise
Five happy moments glided by us, fraught
With hours of feeling. Vivian rose up then,
And came and stood by me, and stroked my hair.
And, in his low voice, o'er and o'er again,
Said, 'Helen, little Helen, frail and fair.'
Then took my face, and turned it to the light,

And looking in my eyes, and seeing what
Was shining from them, murmured, sweet and low,
'Dear eyes, you cannot veil the truth from sight.
You love me, Helen! answer, is it so?'
And I made answer straightway, 'With my life
And soul and strength I love you, O my love!'
He leaned and took me gently to his breast,
And said, 'Here then this dainty head shall rest
Henceforth forever: O my little dove!
My lily-bud—my fragile blossom-wife!'

"And then I told him all my thoughts; and he
Listened, with kisses for his comments, till
My tale was finished. Then he said, 'I will
Be frank with you, my darling, from the start,
And hide no secret from you in my heart.
I love you Helen, but you are not first
To rouse that love to being. Ere we met
I loved a woman madly—never dreaming
She was not all in truth she was in seeming.
Enough! she proved to be that thing accursed
Of God and man—a wily vain coquette.
I hate myself for having loved her. Yet
So much my heart spent on her, it must give
A love less ardent, and less prodigal,
Albeit just as tender and as true—
A milder, yet a faithful love to you.
Just as some evil fortune might befall
A man's great riches, causing him to live
In some low cot, all unpretending, still

As much his home—as much his loved retreat,
As was the princely palace on the hill,
E'en so I give you all that's left, my sweet!
Of my heart-fortune.'
'That were more to me,'
I made swift smiling answer, 'than to be
The worshiped consort of a king.' And so
Our faith was pledged. But Vivian would not go
Until I vowed to wed him New Year day.
And I am sad because you go away
Before that time. I shall not feel half wed
Without you here. Postpone your trip and stay,
And be my bridesmaid."
"Nay, I cannot, dear!
'T would disarrange our plans for half a year.
I'll be in Europe New Year day," I said,
"And send congratulations by the cable."
And from my soul thanked Providence for sparing
The pain, to me, of sharing in, and wearing
The festal garments of a wedding scene,
While all my heart was hung with sorrow's sable.
Forgetting for a season, that between
The cup and lip lies many a chance of loss,
I lived in my near future, confident
All would be as I planned it; and, across
The briny waste of waters, I should find
Some balm and comfort for my troubled mind.
The sad Fall days, like maidens auburn-tressed
And amber-eyed, in purple garments dressed,
Passed by, and dropped their tears upon the tomb
Of fair Queen Summer, buried in her bloom.

Roy left us for a time, and Helen went
To make the nuptial preparations. Then,
Aunt Ruth complained one day of feeling ill:
Her veins ran red with fever; and the skill
Of two physicians could not stem the tide.
The house, that rang so late with laugh and jest,
Grew ghostly with low whispered sounds: and when
The Autumn day, that I had thought to be
Bounding upon the billows of the sea,
Came sobbing in, it found me pale and worn,
Striving to keep away that unloved guest
Who comes unbidden, making hearts to mourn.

Through all the anxious weeks I watched beside
The suff'rer's couch, Roy was my help and stay;
Others were kind, but he alone each day
Brought strength and comfort, by his cheerful face,
And hopeful words, that fell in that sad place
Like rays of light upon a darkened way.
November passed; and Winter, crisp and chill,
In robes of ermine walked on plain and hill.
Returning light and life dispelled the gloom
That cheated Death had brought us from the tomb.
Aunt Ruth was saved, and slowly getting better—
Was dressed each day, and walked about the room.
Then came one morning in the Eastern mail,
A little white-winged birdling of a letter.
I broke the seal and read,
"Maurine, my own!
I hear Aunt Ruth is better, and am glad.
I felt so sorry for you; and so sad

To think I left you when I did—alone
To bear your pain and worry, and those nights
Of weary, anxious watching.
Vivian writes
Your plans are changed now, and you will not sail
Before the Springtime. So you'll come and be
My bridesmaid, darling! Do not say me nay.
But three weeks more of girlhood left to me.
Come, if you can, just two weeks from to-day,
And make your preparations here. My sweet!
Indeed I am not glad Aunt Ruth was ill—
I'm sorry she has suffered so; and still
I'm thankful something happened, so you stayed.
I'm sure my wedding would be incomplete
Without your presence. Selfish, I'm afraid
You'll think your Helen. But I love you so,
How can I be quite willing you should go?
Come Christmas Eve, or earlier. Let me know
And I will meet you, dearie! at the train.
Your happy, loving Helen."
Then the pain
That, hidden under later pain and care,
Had made no moan, but silent, seemed to sleep,
Woke from its trance-like lethargy, to steep
My tortured heart in anguish and despair.

I had relied too fully on my skill
In bending circumstances to my will:
And now I was rebuked and made to see
That God alone knoweth what is to be.

Then came a messenger from Vivian, who
Came not himself, as he was wont to do,
But sent his servant each new day to bring
A kindly message, or an offering
Of juicy fruits to cool the lips of fever,
Or dainty hot-house blossoms, with their bloom
To brighten up the convalescent's room.
But now the servant only brought a line
From Vivian Dangerfield to Roy Montaine,
"Dear Sir, and Friend"—in letters bold and plain,
Written on cream-white paper, so it ran:
"It is the will and pleasure of Miss Trevor,
And therefore doubly so a wish of mine,
That you shall honor me next New Year Eve,
My wedding hour, by standing as best man.
Miss Trevor has six bridesmaids I believe.
Being myself a novice in the art—
If I should fail in acting well my part,
I'll need protection 'gainst the regiment
Of outraged ladies. So, I pray, consent
To stand by me in time of need, and shield
Your friend sincerely, Vivian Dangerfield."

The last least hope had vanished; I must drain,
E'en to the dregs, this bitter cup of pain.

Part VI.

There was a week of bustle and of hurry;
A stately home echoed to voices sweet,
Calling, replying; and to tripping feet
Of busy bridesmaids, running to and fro,
With all that girlish fluttering and flurry
Preceding such occasions.
Helen's room
Was like a lily-garden, all in bloom,
Decked with the dainty robes of her trousseau.
My robe was fashioned by swift, skillful hands—
A thing of beauty, elegant and rich,
A mystery of loopings, puffs and bands;
And as I watched it growing, stitch by stitch,
I felt as one might feel who should behold
With vision trance-like, where his body lay
In deathly slumber, simulating clay,
His grave-cloth sewed together, fold on fold.

I lived with ev'ry nerve upon the strain,
As men go into battle; and the pain,
That, more and more, to my sad heart revealed,
Grew ghastly with its horrors, was concealed
From mortal eyes by superhuman power,
That God bestowed upon me, hour by hour.

What night the Old Year gave unto the New
The key of human happiness and woe,
The pointed stars, upon their field of blue,
Shone, white and perfect, o'er a world below,

Of snow-clad beauty; all the trees were dressed
In gleaming garments, decked with diadems,
Each seeming like a bridal-bidden guest,
Coming o'er-laden with a gift of gems.

The bustle of the dressing-room; the sound
Of eager voices in discourse; the clang
Of "sweet bells jangled"; thud of steel-clad feet
That beat swift music on the frozen ground—
All blent together in my brain, and rang
A medley of strange noises, incomplete,
And full of discords.
Then out on the night
Streamed from the open vestibule, a light
That lit the velvet blossoms which we trod,
With all the hues of those that deck the sod.
The grand cathedral windows were ablaze
With gorgeous colors; through a sea of bloom,
Up the long aisle, to join the waiting groom,
The bridal cortege passed.
As some lost soul
Might surge on with the curious crowd, to gaze
Upon its coffined body, so I went
With that glad festal throng. The organ sent
Great waves of melody along the air,
That broke and fell, in liquid drops, like spray,
On happy hearts that listened. But to me
It sounded faintly, as if miles away,
A troubled spirit, sitting in despair
Beside the sad and ever-moaning sea,
Gave utterance to sighing sounds of dole.

We paused before the altar. Framed in flowers,
The white-robed man of God stood forth.
I heard
The solemn service open; through long hours
I seemed to stand and listen, while each word
Fell on my ear as falls the sound of clay
Upon the coffin of the worshiped dead.
The stately father gave the bride away:
The bridegroom circled with a golden band
The taper finger of her dainty hand.
The last imposing, binding words were said—
"What God has joined let no man put asunder"—
And all my strife with self was at an end;
My lover was the husband of my friend.

How strangely, in some awful hour of pain,
External trifles with our sorrows blend!
I never hear the mighty organ's thunder,
I never catch the scent of heliotrope,
Nor see stained windows all ablaze with light,
Without that dizzy whirling of the brain,
And all the ghastly feeling of that night,
When my sick heart relinquished love and hope.

The pain we feel so keenly may depart,
And e'en its memory cease to haunt the heart;
But some slight thing, a perfume, or a sound
Will probe the closed recesses of the wound,
And for a moment bring the old-time smart.

Congratulations, kisses, tears and smiles,
Good-byes and farewells given; then across
The snowy waste of weary wintry miles,
Back to my girlhood's home, where, through each room,
For evermore pale phantoms of delight
Should aimless wander, always in my sight,
Pointing, with ghostly fingers, to the tomb
Wet with the tears of living pain and loss.

The sleepless nights of watching and of care,
Followed by that one week of keenest pain,
Taxing my weakened system, and my brain,
Brought on a ling'ring illness. Day by day,
In that strange, apathetic state I lay,
Of mental and of physical despair.
I had no pain, no fever, and no chill,
But lay without ambition, strength, or will,
Knowing no wish for anything but rest,
Which seemed, of all God's store of gifts, the best.

Physicians came and shook their heads and sighed;
And to their score of questions I replied,
With but one languid answer, o'er and o'er,
"I am so weary—weary—nothing more."

I slept, and dreamed I was some feathered thing,
Flying through space with ever-aching wing,
Seeking a ship called Rest, all snowy white,
That sailed and sailed before me, just in sight,

But always one unchanging distance kept,
And woke more weary than before I slept.

I slept, and dreamed I ran to win a prize,
A hand from heaven held down before my eyes.
All eagerness I sought it—it was gone,
But shone in all its beauty farther on.
I ran, and ran, and ran, in eager quest
Of that great prize, whereon was written "rest,"
Which ever just beyond my reach did gleam,
And wakened doubly weary with my dream.

I dreamed I was a crystal drop of rain,
That saw a snow-white lily on the plain,
And left the cloud to nestle in her breast.
I fell and fell, but nevermore found rest—
I fell and fell, but found no stopping place,
Through leagues and leagues of never-ending space,
While space illimitable stretched before.

And all these dreams but wearied me the more.

Familiar voices sounded in my room—
Aunt Ruth's, and Roy's, and Helen's: but they seemed
A part of some strange fancy I had dreamed,
And now remembered dimly.
Wrapped in gloom,
My mind, o'er-taxed, lost hold of time at last,
Ignored its future, and forgot its past,

And groped along the present, as a light,
Carried, uncovered, through the fogs of night,
Will flicker faintly.
But I felt, at length,
When March winds brought vague rumors of the spring,
A certain sense of "restlessness with rest."
My aching frame was weary of repose,
And wanted action.
Then slow-creeping strength
Came back with Mem'ry, hand in hand, to bring
And lay upon my sore and bleeding breast,
Grim-visaged Recollection's thorny rose.
I gained, and failed. One day could ride and walk,
The next would find me prostrate; while a flock
Of ghostly thoughts, like phantom birds, would flit
About the chambers of my heart, or sit,
Pale spectres of the past, with folded wings,
Perched, silently, upon the voiceless strings,
That once resounded to Hope's happy lays.

So passed the ever-changing April days.
When May came, lightsome footed, o'er the lea,
Accompanied by kind Aunt Ruth and Roy,
I bade farewell to home with secret joy,
And turned my wan face eastward to the sea.
Roy planned our route of travel: for all lands
Were one to him. Or Egypt's burning sands,
Or Alps of Switzerland, or stately Rome,
All were familiar as the fields of home.

There was a year of wand'ring to and fro,
Like restless spirits; scaling mountain heights;
Dwelling among the countless, rare delights
Of lands historic; turning dusty pages,
Stamped with the tragedies of mighty ages;
Gazing upon the scenes of bloody acts,
Of kings long buried—bare, unvarnished facts,
Surpassing wildest fictions of the brain;
Rubbing against all people, high and low,
And by this contact feeling Self to grow
Smaller and less important, and the vein
Of human kindness deeper, seeing God,
Unto the humble delver of the sod,
And to the ruling monarch on the throne,
Has given hope, ambition, joy, and pain,
And that all hearts have feelings like our own.

There is no school that disciplines the mind,
And broadens thought, like contact with mankind.
The college-prisoned greybeard, who has burned
The midnight lamp, and book-bound knowledge learned,
Till sciences or classics hold no lore
He has not conned and studied, o'er and o'er,
Is but a babe in wisdom, when compared
With some unlettered wand'rer, who has shared
The hospitalities of every land;
Felt touch of brother in each proffered hand;
Made man his study, and the world his college,
And gained this grand epitome of knowledge:

Each human being has a heart and soul,
And self is but an atom of the whole.
I hold he is best learnèd and most wise,
Who best and most can love and sympathize.
Book-wisdom makes us vain and self-contained;
Our banded minds go round in little grooves;
But constant friction with the world removes
These iron foes to freedom, and we rise
To grander heights, and, all untrammeled, find
A better atmosphere and clearer skies;
And through its broadened realm, no longer chained,
Thought travels freely, leaving Self behind.

Where'er we chanced to wander or to roam,
Glad letters came from Helen; happy things,
Like little birds that followed on swift wings,
Bringing their tender messages from home.
Her days were poems, beautiful, complete.
The rhythm perfect, and the burden sweet.
She was so happy—happy, and so blest.

My heart had found contentment in that year.
With health restored, my life seemed full of cheer.
The heart of youth turns ever to the light;
Sorrow and gloom may curtain it like night,
But, in its very anguish and unrest,
It beats and tears the pall-like folds away,
And finds again the sunlight of the day.

And yet, despite the changes without measure,
Despite sight-seeing, round on round of pleasure;

Despite new friends, new suitors, still my heart
Was conscious of a something lacking, where
Love once had dwelt, and afterward despair.
Now love was buried; and despair had flown
Before the healthful zephyrs that had blown
From heights serene and lofty; and the place
Where both had dwelt, was empty, voiceless space.
And so I took my long-loved study, art,
The dreary vacuum in my life to fill,
And worked, and labored, with a right good will.
Aunt Ruth and I took rooms in Rome; while Roy
Lingered in Scotland, with his new-found joy.
A dainty little lassie, Grace Kildare,
Had snared him in her flossy, flaxen hair,
And made him captive.
We were thrown, by chance,
In contact with her people while in France
The previous season: she was wholly sweet
And fair and gentle; so näive, and yet
So womanly, she was at once the pet
Of all our party; and, ere many days,
Won by her fresh face, and her artless ways,
Roy fell a helpless captive at her feet.
Her home was in the Highlands; and she came
Of good old stock, of fair untarnished fame.

Through all these months Roy had been true as steel;
And by his every action made me feel
He was my friend and brother, and no more.
The same big-souled and trusty friend of yore.
Yet, in my secret heart, I wished I knew

Whether the love he felt one time was dead,
Or only hidden, for my sake, from view.
So when he came to me one day, and said,
The velvet blackness of his eyes ashine
With light of love and triumph: "Cousin, mine,
Congratulate me! She whom I adore
Has pledged to me the promise of her hand;
Her heart I have already," I was glad
With double gladness, for it freed my mind
Of fear that he, in secret, might be sad.

From March till June had left her moons behind,
And merged her rose-red beauty in July,
There was no message from my native land.
Then came a few brief lines, by Vivian penned:
Death had been near to Helen, but passed by;
The danger was now over. God was kind;
The mother and the child were both alive;
No other child was ever known to thrive
As throve this one, nurse had been heard to say.
The infant was a wonder, every way.
And, at command of Helen, he would send
A lock of baby's golden hair to me.
And did I, on my honor, ever see
Such hair before? Helen would write, ere long:
She gained quite slowly, but would soon be strong—
Stronger than ever, so the doctors said.
I took the tiny ringlet, golden—fair,
Mayhap his hand had severed from the head
Of his own child, and pressed it to my cheek
And to my lips, and kissed it o'er and o'er.

All my maternal instincts seemed to rise,
And clamor for their rights, while my wet eyes,
Rained tears upon the silken tress of hair.
The woman struggled with her heart before!
It was the mother in me now did speak,
Moaning, like Rachel, that her babes were not,
And crying out against her barren lot.

Once I bemoaned the long and lonely years
That stretched before me, dark with love's eclipse;
And thought how my unmated heart would miss
The shelter of a broad and manly breast—
The strong, bold arm—the tender clinging kiss—
And all pure love's possessions, manifold;
But now I wept a flood of bitter tears,
Thinking of little heads of shining gold,
That would not on my bosom sink to rest;
Of little hands that would not touch my cheek;
Of little lisping voices, and sweet lips,
That never in my list'ning ear would speak
The blessed name of mother.
Oh, in woman
How mighty is the love of offspring! Ere
Unto her wond'ring, untaught mind unfolds
The myst'ry that is half divine, half human,
Of life and birth, the love of unborn souls
Within her, and the mother-yearning creeps
Through her warm heart, and stirs its hidden deeps,
And grows and strengthens with each riper year.

. . . . .

As storms may gather in a placid sky,
And spend their fury, and then pass away,
Leaving again the blue of cloudless day,
E'en so the tempest of my grief passed by.
'T was weak to mourn for what I had resigned,
With the deliberate purpose of my mind,
To my sweet friend.
Relinquishing my love,
I gave my dearest hope of joy to her.
If God, from out his boundless store above,
Had chosen added blessings to confer,
I would rejoice, for her sake—not repine
That th' immortal treasures were not mine.

Better my lonely sorrow, than to know
My selfish joy had been another's woe;
Better my grief and my strength to control,
Than the despair of her frail-bodied soul;
Better to go on, loveless, to the end,
Than wear love's rose, whose thorn had slain my friend.

Work is the salve that heals the wounded heart.
With will most resolute I set my aim
To enter on the weary race for Fame,
And if I failed to climb the dizzy height,
To reach some point of excellence in art.

E'en as the Maker held earth incomplete,
Till man was formed, and placed upon the sod,
The perfect, living image of his God,

All landscape scenes were lacking in my sight,
Wherein the human figure had no part.
In that, all lines of symmetry did meet—
All hues of beauty mingle. So I brought
Enthusiasm in abundance, thought,
Much study, and some talent, day by day,
To help me in my efforts to portray
The wond'rous power, majesty and grace
Stamped on some form, or looking from some face.
This was to be my specialty: To take
Human emotion for my theme, and make
The unassisted form divine express
Anger or Sorrow, Pleasure, Pain, Distress;
And thus to build Fame's monument above
The grave of my departed hope and love.

This is not Genius. Genius spreads its wings
And soars beyond itself, or selfish things.
Talent has need of stepping-stones: some cross,
Some cheated purpose, some great pain or loss,
Must lay the groundwork, and arouse ambition,
Before it labors onward to fruition.

But, as the lark from beds of bloom will rise
And sail and sing among the very skies,
Still mounting near and nearer to the light,
Impelled alone by love of upward flight,
So Genius soars—it does not need to climb—
Upon God-given wings, to heights sublime.
Some sportman's shot, grazing the singer's throat,

Some venomous assault of birds of prey,
May speed its flight toward the realm of day,
And tinge with triumph every liquid note.
So deathless Genius mounts but higher yet,
When Strife and Envy think to slay or fret.

There is no balking Genius. Only death
Can silence it, or hinder. While there's breath
Or sense of feeling, it will spurn the sod,
And lift itself to glory, and to God.
The acorn sprouted—weeds nor flowers can choke
The certain growth of th' upreaching oak.

Talent was mine, not Genius; and my mind
Seemed bound by chains, and would not leave behind
Its selfish love and sorrow.
Did I strive
To picture some emotion, lo! *his* eyes,
Of emerald beauty, dark as ocean dyes,
Looked from the canvas: and my buried pain
Rose from its grave, and stood by me alive.
Whate'er my subject, in some hue or line,
The glorious beauty of his face would shine.

So for a time my labor seemed in vain,
Since it but freshened, and made keener yet,
The grief my heart was striving to forget.

While in his form all strength and magnitude
With grace and supple sinews were entwined,
While in his face all beauties were combined

Of perfect features, intellect and truth,
With all that fine rich coloring of youth,
How could my brush portray aught good or fair
Wherein no fatal likeness should intrude
Of him my soul had worshiped?
But, at last,
Setting a watch upon my unwise heart
That thus would mix its sorrow with my art,
I resolutely shut away the past,
And made the toilsome present passing bright
With dreams of what was hidden from my sight
In the far distant future, when the soil
Should yield me golden fruit for all my toil.

Part VII.

With much hard labor and some pleasure fraught,
The months rolled by me noiselessly, that taught
My hand to grow more skillful in its art,
Strengthened my daring dream of fame, and brought
Sweet hope and resignation to my heart.

Brief letters came from Helen, now and then:
She was quite well—oh, yes! quite well, indeed!
But still so weak and nervous. By and by,
When baby, being older, should not need
Such constant care, she would grow strong again.
She was as happy as a soul could be;
No least cloud hovered in her azure sky;
She had not thought life held such depths of bliss.
Dear baby sent Maurine a loving kiss,
And said she was a naughty, naughty girl,
Not to come home and see ma's little pearl.

No gift of costly jewels, or of gold,
Had been so precious or so dear to me,
As each brief line wherein her joy was told.
It lightened toil, and took the edge from pain,
Knowing my sacrifice was not in vain.

Roy purchased fine estates in Scotland, where
He built a pretty villa-like retreat.
And when the Roman Summer's languid heat

Made work a punishment, I turned my face
Toward the Highlands, and with Roy and Grace
Found rest and freedom from all thought and care.

I was a willing worker. Not an hour
Passed idly by me: each, I would employ
To some good purpose, ere it glided on
To swell the tide of hours forever gone.
My first completed picture, known as "Joy,"
Won pleasant words of praise. "Possesses power,"
"Displays much talent," "Very fairly done."
So fell the comments on my grateful ear.

Swift in the wake of Joy, and always near,
Walks her sad sister Sorrow. So my brush
Began depicting sorrow, heavy-eyed,
With pallid visage, ere the rosy flush
Upon the beaming face of Joy had dried.
The careful study of long months, it won
Golden opinions; even bringing forth
That certain sign of merit—a critique
Which set both pieces down as daubs, and weak
As empty heads that sang their praises—so
Proving conclusively the pictures' worth.
These critics and reviewers do not use
Their precious ammunition to abuse
A worthless work. That, left alone, they know
Will find its proper level; and they aim
Their batteries at rising works which claim
Too much of public notice. But this shot
Resulted only in some noise, which brought

A dozen people, where one came before
To view my pictures; and I had my hour
Of holding those frail baubles, Fame and Pow'r.
An English Baron who had lived two score
Of his allotted three score years and ten,
Bought both the pieces. He was very kind,
And so attentive, I, not being blind,
Must understand his meaning.
Therefore, when
He said,
"Sweet friend, whom I would make my wife,
The 'Joy' and 'Sorrow' this dear hand portrayed
I have in my possession: now resign
Into my careful keeping, and make mine,
The joy and sorrow of your future life,"—
I was prepared to answer, but delayed,
Grown undecided suddenly.
My mind
Argued the matter coolly pro and con,
And made resolve to speed his wooing on
And grant him favor. He was good and kind;
Not young, no doubt he would be quite content
With my respect, nor miss an ardent love;
Could give me ties of family and home;
And then, perhaps, my mind was not above
Setting some value on a titled name—
Ambitious woman's weakness!
Then my art
Would be encouraged and pursued the same,
And I could spend my winters all in Rome.

Love never more could touch my wasteful heart
That all its wealth upon one object spent.
Existence would be very bleak and cold,
After long years, when I was gray and old,
With neither home nor children.
Once a wife,
I would forget the sorrow of my life,
And pile new sods upon the grave of pain.
My mind so argued; and my sad heart heard,
But made no comment.
Then the Baron spoke,
And waited for my answer. All in vain
I strove for strength to utter that one word
My mind dictated. Moments rolled away—
Until at last my torpid heart awoke,
And forced my trembling lips to say him nay.
And then my eyes with sudden tears o'erran,
In pity for myself and for this man
Who stood before me, lost in pained surprise.
"Dear friend," I cried, "Dear generous friend, forgive
A troubled woman's weakness! As I live,
In truth I meant to answer otherwise.
From out its store, my heart can give you naught
But honor and respect; and yet methought
I would give willing answer, did you sue.
But now I know 't were cruel wrong I planned;
Taking a heart that beat with love most true,
And giving in exchange an empty hand.
Who weds for love alone, may not be wise:
Who weds without it, angels must despise.

Love and respect together must combine
To render marriage holy and divine;
And lack of either, sure as Fate, destroys
Continuation of the nuptial joys,
And brings regret, and gloomy discontent,
To put to rout each tender sentiment.
Nay, nay! I will not burden all your life
By that possession—an unloving wife;
Nor will I take the sin upon my soul
Of wedding where my heart goes not in whole.
However bleak may be my single lot,
I will not stain my life with such a blot.
Dear friend, farewell! the earth is very wide;
It holds some fairer woman for your bride;
I would I had a heart to give to you,
But, lacking it, can only say—adieu!"

He whom temptation never has assailed,
Knows not that subtle sense of moral strength;
When sorely tried, we waver, but at length,
Rise up and turn away, not having failed.

The Autumn of the third year came and went;
The mild Italian winter was half spent,
When this brief message came across the sea:
"My darling! I am dying. Come to me.
Love, which so long the growing truth concealed,
Stands pale within its shadow. O, my sweet!
This heart of mine grows fainter with each beat—

Dying with very weight of bliss. O, come!
And take the legacy I leave to you,
Before these lips forevermore are dumb.
In life or death, Yours, Helen Dangerfield."

This plaintive letter bore a month old date;
And, wild with fears lest I had come too late,
I bade the old world and new friends adieu,
And with Aunt Ruth, who long had sighed for home,
I turned my back on glory, art, and Rome.

All selfish thoughts were merged in one wild fear
That she for whose dear sake my heart had bled,
Rather than her sweet eyes should know one tear,
Was passing from me; that she might be dead;
And, dying, had been sorely grieved with me,
Because I made no answer to her plea.

"O, ship, that sailest slowly, slowly on,
Make haste before a wasting life is gone!
Make haste that I may catch a fleeting breath!
And true in life, be true e'en unto death.

"O, ship, sail on! and bear me o'er the tide
To her for whom my woman's heart once died.
Sail, sail, O, ship! for she hath need of me,
And I would know what her last wish may be!
I have been true, so true, through all the past.
Sail, sail, O, ship! I would not fail at last."

So prayed my heart still o'er, and ever o'er,
Until the weary lagging ship reached shore.
All sad with fears that I had come too late,
By that strange source whence men communicate,
Though miles on miles of space between them lie,
I spoke with Vivian: "Does she live? Reply."
The answer came. "She lives, but hasten, friend!
Her journey draweth swiftly to its end."

Ah me! ah me! when each remembered spot,
My own dear home, the lane that led to his—
The fields, the woods, the lake, burst on my sight,
Oh! then, Self rose up in asserting might;
Oh, then, my bursting heart all else forgot,
But those sweet early years of lost delight,
Of hope, defeat, of anguish and of bliss.

I have a theory, vague, undefined,
That each emotion of the human mind,
Love, pain or passion, sorrow or despair,
Is a live spirit, dwelling in the air.
Until it takes possession of some breast;
And, when at length, grown weary of unrest,
We rise up strong and cast it from the heart,
And bid it leave us wholly, and depart,
It does not die, it cannot die; but goes
And mingles with some restless wind that blows
About the region where it had its birth.
And though we wander over all the earth,
That spirit waits, and lingers, year by year,
Invisible, and clothèd like the air,

Hoping that we may yet again draw near,
And it may haply take us unaware,
And once more find safe shelter in the breast
It stirred of old with pleasure or unrest.

Told by my heart, and wholly positive,
Some old emotion long had ceased to live;
That, were it called, it could not hear or come,
Because it was so voiceless and so dumb,
Yet, passing where it first sprang into life,
My very soul has suddenly been rife
With all the old intensity of feeling.
It seemed a living spirit, which came stealing
Into my heart from that departed day;
Exiled emotion, which I fancied clay.

So now into my troubled heart, above
The present's pain and sorrow, crept the love
And strife and passion of a by-gone hour,
Possessed of all their olden might and power.
'T was but a moment, and the spell was broken
By pleasant words of greeting, gently spoken,
And Vivian stood before us.
But I saw
In him the husband of my friend alone.
The old emotions might at times return,
And smold'ring fires leap up an hour and burn;
But never yet had I transgressed God's law,
By looking on the man I had resigned,
With any hidden feeling in my mind,

Which she, his wife, my friend, might not have known.
He was but little altered. From his face
The nonchalant and almost haughty grace,
The lurking laughter waiting in his eyes,
The years had stolen, leaving in their place
A settled sadness, which was not despair,
Nor was it gloom, nor weariness, nor care,
But something like the vapor o'er the skies
Of Indian summer, beautiful to see,
But spoke of frosts, which had been and would be.
There was that in his face which cometh not,
Save when the soul has many a battle fought,
And conquered self by constant sacrifice.

There are two sculptors, who, with chisels fine,
Render the plainest features half divine.
All other artists strive and strive in vain,
To picture beauty perfect and complete.
Their statues only crumble at their feet,
Without the master touch of Faith and Pain.
And now his face, that perfect seemed before,
Chiseled by these two careful artists, wore
A look exalted, which the spirit gives
When soul has conquered, and the body lives
Subservient to its bidding.

In a room
Which curtained out the February gloom,
And, redolent with perfume, bright with flowers,
Rested the eye like one of Summer's bowers,

I found my Helen, who was less mine now
Than Death's; for on the marble of her brow,
His seal was stamped indelibly.
Her form
Was like the slender willow, when some storm
Has stripped it bare of foliage. Her face,
Pale always, now was ghastly in its hue:
And, like two lamps, in some dark, hollow place,
Burned her large eyes, grown more intensely blue.
Her fragile hands displayed each cord and vein,
And on her mouth was that drawn look, of pain
Which is not uttered. Yet an inward light
Shone through and made her wasted features bright
With an unearthly beauty; and an awe
Crept o'er me, gazing on her, for I saw
She was so near to Heaven that I seemed
To look upon the face of one redeemed.
She turned the brilliant luster of her eyes
Upon me. She had passed beyond surprise,
Or any strong emotion linked with clay.
But as I glided to her where she lay,
A smile, celestial in its sweetness, wreathed
Her pallid features. "Welcome home!" she breathed.
"Dear hands! dear lips! I touch you and rejoice."
And like the dying echo of a voice
Were her faint tones that thrilled upon my ear.

I fell upon my knees beside her bed;
All agonies within my heart were wed,
While to the aching numbness of my grief,
Mine eyes refused the solace of a tear,—
The tortured soul's most merciful relief.

Her wasted hand caressed my bended head
For one sad, sacred moment. Then she said,
In that low tone so like the wind's refrain,
"Maurine, my own! give not away to pain;
The time is precious. Ere another dawn
My soul may hear the summons and pass on.
Arise, sweet sister! rest a little while,
And when refreshed, come hither. I grow weak
With every hour that passes. I must speak
And make my dying wishes known to-night.
Go now." And in the halo of her smile,
Which seemed to fill the room with golden light,
I turned and left her.
Later in the gloom,
Of coming night, I entered that dim room,
And sat down by her. Vivian held her hand:
And on the pillow at her side, there smiled
The beauteous count'nance of a sleeping child.

"Maurine," spoke Helen, "for three blissful years,
My heart has dwelt in an enchanted land;
And I have drank the sweetened cup of joy,
Without one drop of anguish or alloy.
And so, ere Pain embitters it with gall,
Or sad-eyed Sorrow fills it full of tears,
And bids me quaff, which is the Fate of all
Who linger long upon this troubled way,
God takes me to the realm of Endless Day,
To mingle with his angels, who alone
Can understand such bliss as I have known.

I do not murmur. God has heaped my measure,
In three short years, full to the brim with pleasure;
And, from the fullness of an earthly love,
I pass to th' Immortal arms above,
Before I even brush the skirts of Woe.

"I leave my aged parents here below,
With none to comfort them. Maurine, sweet friend!
Be kind to them, and love them to the end,
Which may not be far distant.
And I leave
A soul immortal in your charge, Maurine.
From this most holy, sad and sacred eve,
Till God shall claim her, she is yours to keep,
To love and shelter, to protect and guide."
She touched the slumb'ring cherub at her side,
And Vivian gently bore her, still asleep,
And laid the precious burden on my breast.

A solemn silence fell upon the scene.
And when the sleeping infant smiled, and pressed
My yielding bosom with her waxen cheek,
I felt it would be sacrilege to speak,
Such wordless joy possessed me.
Oh! at last
This infant, who, in that tear-blotted past,
Had caused my soul such travail, was my own:
Through all the lonely coming years to be
Mine own to cherish—wholly mine alone.
And what I mourned so hopelessly as lost
Was now restored, and given back to me.

The dying voice continued:

"In this child
You yet have me, whose mortal life she cost.
But all that was most pure and undefiled,
And good within me, lives in her again.
Maurine, my husband loves me; yet I know,
Moving about the wide world, to and fro,
And through, and in the busy haunts of men,
Not always will his heart be dumb with woe,
But sometime waken to a later love.
Nay, Vivian, hush! my soul has passed above
All selfish feelings! I would have it so.
While I am with the angels, blest and glad,
I would not have you sorrowing and sad,
In loneliness go mourning to the end.
But, love! I could not trust to any other
The sacred office of a foster-mother
To this sweet cherub, save my own heart-friend.

"Teach her to love her father's name, Maurine,
Where'er he wanders. Keep my memory green
In her young heart, and lead her in her youth,
To drink from th' eternal fount of Truth;
Vex her not with sectarian discourse,
Nor strive to teach her piety by force;
Ply not her mind with harsh and narrow creeds,
Nor frighten her with an avenging God,
Who rules his subjects with a burning rod;
But teach her that each mortal simply needs
To grow in hate of hate and love of love,
To gain a kingdom in the courts above.

"Let her be free and natural as the flowers,
That smile and nod throughout the summer hours.
Let her rejoice in all the joys of youth,
But first impress upon her mind this truth:
No lasting happiness is e'er attained
Save when the heart some *other* seeks to please.
The cup of selfish pleasures soon is drained,
And full of gall and bitterness the lees.
Next to her God, teach her to love her land;
In her young bosom light the patriot's flame
Until the heart within her shall expand
With love and fervor at her country's name.

"No coward-mother bears a valiant son.
And this, my last wish, is an earnest one.

"Maurine, my o'er-taxed strength is waning; you
Have heard my wishes, and you will be true
In death as you have been in life, my own!
Now leave me for a little while alone
With him—my husband. Dear love! I shall rest
So sweetly with no care upon my breast.
Good night, Maurine, come to me in the morning."

But lo! the bridegroom with no further warning
Came for her at the dawning of the day.
She heard his voice, and smiled, and passed away
Without a struggle.
Leaning o'er her bed
To give her greeting, I found but her clay,
And Vivian bowed beside it.

And I said,
"Dear friend! my soul shall treasure thy request,
And when the night of fever and unrest
Melts in the morning of Eternity,
Like a freed bird, then I will come to thee.

"I will come to thee in the morning, sweet!
I have been true; and soul with soul shall meet
Before God's throne, and shall not be afraid.
Thou gav'st me trust, and it was not betrayed.

"I will come to thee in the morning, dear!
The night is dark. I do not know how near
The morn may be of that Eternal Day;
I can but keep my faithful watch and pray.

"I will come to thee in the morning, love!
Wait for me on the Eternal Heights above.
The way is troubled where my feet must climb,
Ere I shall tread the mountain-top sublime.

"I will come in the morning, O, mine own!
But for a time must grope my way alone,
Through tears and sorrow, till the Day shall dawn,
And I shall hear the summons, and pass on.

"I will come in the morning. Rest secure!
My hope is certain and my faith is sure.
After the gloom and darkness of the night
I will come to thee with the morning light."

* * * * * *

Three peaceful years slipped silently away.

We dwelt together in my childhood's home,
Aunt Ruth and I, and sunny-hearted May.
She was a fair and most exquisite child;
Her pensive face was delicate and mild
Like her dead mother's; but through her dear eyes
Her father smiled upon me, day by day.
Afar in foreign countries did he roam,
Now resting under Italy's blue skies,
And now with Roy in Scotland.
And he sent
Brief, friendly letters, telling where he went
And what he saw, addressed to May or me.
And I would write and tell him how she grew—
And how she talked about him o'er the sea
In her sweet baby fashion; how she knew
His picture in the album; how each day
She knelt and prayed the blessed Lord would bring
Her own papa back to his little May.

It was a warm bright morning in the Spring.
I sat in that same sunny portico,
Where I was sitting seven years ago
When Vivian came. My eyes were full of tears,
As I looked back across the checkered years.
How many were the changes they had brought!
Pain, death, and sorrow! but the lesson taught
To my young heart had been of untold worth.
I had learned how to "suffer and grow strong"—
That knowledge which best serves us here on earth,
And brings reward in Heaven.

Oh! how long
The years had been since that June morning when
I heard his step upon the walk, and yet
I seemed to hear its echo still.
Just then
Down that same path I turned my eyes, tear-wet,
And lo! the wanderer from a foreign land
Stood there before me!—holding out his hand
And smiling with those wond'rous eyes of old.

To hide my tears, I ran and brought his child;
But she was shy, and clung to me, when told
This was papa, for whom her prayers were said.
She dropped her eyes and shook her little head,
And would not by his coaxing be beguiled,
Or go to him.
Aunt Ruth was not at home,
And we two sat and talked, as strangers might,
Of distant countries which we both had seen.
But once I thought I saw his large eyes light
With sudden passion, when there came a pause
In our chit-chat, and then he spoke:
"Maurine,
I saw a number of your friends in Rome.
We talked of you. They seemed surprised, because
You were not 'mong the seekers for a name.
They thought your whole ambition was for fame."

"It might have been," I answered, "when my heart
Had nothing else to fill it. Now my art

Is but a recreation. I have *this*
To love and live for, which I had not then."
And, leaning down, I pressed a tender kiss
Upon my child's fair brow.

"And yet," he said,
The old light leaping to his eyes again,
"And yet, Maurine, they say you might have wed
A noble Baron! one of many men
Who laid their hearts and fortunes at your feet.
Why won the bravest of them no return?"

I bowed my head, nor dared his gaze to meet.
On cheek and brow I felt the red blood burn,
And strong emotion strangled speech.
He rose
And came and knelt beside me.
"Sweet, my sweet!"
He murmured softly, "God in Heaven knows
How well I loved you seven years ago.
He only knows my anguish, and my grief,
When your own acts forced on me the belief
That I had been your plaything and your toy.
Yet from his lips I since have learned that Roy
Held no place nearer than a friend and brother.
And then a faint suspicion, undefined,
Of what had been—was—might be, stirred my mind,
And that great love, I thought died at a blow,
Rose up within me, strong with hope and life.

"Before all heaven and the angel mother
Of this sweet child that slumbers on your heart,
Maurine, Maurine, I claim you for my wife—
Mine own, forever, until death shall part!"

Through happy mists of upward welling tears,
I leaned, and looked into his beauteous eyes.
"Dear heart," I said, "if she who dwells above
Looks down upon us, from yon azure skies,
She can but bless us, knowing all these years
My soul had yearned in silence for the love
That crowned her life, and left mine own so bleak
I turned you from me for her fair, frail sake.
For her sweet child's, and for my own, I take
You back to be all mine, for evermore."

Just then the child upon my breast awoke
From her light sleep, and laid her downy cheek
Against her father as he knelt by me.
And this unconscious action seemed to be
A silent blessing, which the mother spoke
Gazing upon us from the mystic shore.

TWO SUNSETS.

In the fair morning of his life,
  When his pure heart lay in his breast,
  Panting, with all that wild unrest
To plunge into the great world's strife

That fills young hearts with mad desire,
  He saw a sunset. Red and gold
  The burning billows surged and rolled,
And upward tossed their caps of fire.

He looked. And as he looked, the sight
  Sent from his soul through breast and brain
  Such intense joy, it hurt like pain.
His heart seemed bursting with delight.

So near the Unknown seemed, so close
  He might have grasped it with his hand.
  He felt his inmost soul expand,
As sunlight will expand a rose.

One day he heard a singing strain—
  A human voice, in bird-like trills.
  He paused, and little rapture-rills
Went trickling downward through each vein.

And in his heart the whole day long,
As in a temple veiled and dim,
He kept and bore about with him
The beauty of that singer's song.

And then? But why relate what then?
His smoldering heart flamed into fire—
He had his one supreme desire,
And plunged into the world of men.

For years queen Folly held her sway.
With pleasures of the grosser kind
She fed his flesh and drugged his mind,
Till, shamed, he sated turned away.

He sought his boyhood's home. That hour
Triumphant should have been, in sooth,
Since he went forth an unknown youth,
And came back crowned with wealth and power.

The clouds made day a gorgeous bed;
He saw the splendor of the sky
With unmoved heart and stolid eye;
He only knew the West was red.

Then suddenly a fresh young voice
Rose, bird-like, from some hidden place,
He did not even turn his face;
It struck him simply as a noise.

He trod the old paths up and down.
Their rich-hued leaves by Fall winds whirled—
How dull they were—how dull the world—
Dull even in the pulsing town.

O! worst of punishments, that brings
A blunting of all finer sense,
A loss of feelings keen, intense,
And dulls us to the higher things.

O! penalty most dire, most sure,
Swift following after gross delights,
That we no more see beauteous sights,
Or hear as hear the good and pure.

O! shape more hideous and more dread
Than Vengeance takes in creed-taught minds,
This certain doom that blunts and blinds,
And strikes the holiest feelings dead.

UNREST.

In the youth of the year, when the birds were building,
When the green was showing on tree and hedge,
And the tenderest light of all lights was gilding
The world from zenith to outermost edge,

My soul grew sad and longingly lonely!
I sighed for the season of sun and rose,
And I said, "In the Summer and that time only
Lies sweet contentment and blest repose."

With bee and bird for her maids of honor
Came Princess Summer in robes of green.
And the King of day smiled down upon her
And wooed her, and won her, and made her queen.
Fruit of their union and true love's pledges,
Beautiful roses bloomed day by day,
And rambled in gardens and hid in hedges
Like royal children in sportive play.

My restless soul for a little season
Reveled in rapture of glow and bloom,
And then, like a subject who harbors treason,
Grew full of rebellion and gray with gloom.
And I said, "I am sick of the Summer's blisses,
Of warmth and beauty, and nothing more.
The full fruition my sad soul misses
That beauteous Fall time holds in store!"

But now when the colors are almost blinding,
Burning and blending on bush and tree,
And the rarest fruits are mine for the finding,
And the year is ripe as a year can be,
My soul complains in the same old fashion;
Crying aloud in my troubled breast
Is the same old longing, the same old passion.
O where is the treasure which men call rest?

"ARTIST'S LIFE."

Of all the waltzes the great Strauss wrote,
Mad with melody, rhythm—rife
From the very first to the final note,
Give me his "Artist's Life!"

It stirs my blood to my finger ends,
Thrills me and fills me with vague unrest,
And all that is sweetest and saddest blends
Together within my breast.

It brings back that night in the dim arcade,
In love's sweet morning and life's best prime,
When the great brass orchestra played and played,
And set our thoughts to rhyme.

It brings back that Winter of mad delights,
Of leaping pulses and tripping feet,
And those languid moon-washed Summer nights
When we heard the band in the street.

It brings back rapture and glee and glow,
It brings back passion and pain and strife,
And so of all the waltzes I know,
Give me the "Artist's Life."

For it is so full of the dear old time—
So full of the dear old friends I knew.
And under its rhythm, and lilt, and rhyme,
I am always finding—*you.*

NOTHING BUT STONES.

I think I never passed so sad an hour,
Dear friend, as that one at the church to-night.
The edifice from basement to the tower
Was one resplendent blaze of colored light.
Up through broad aisles the stylish crowd was thronging,
Each richly robed like some king's bidden guest.
"Here will I bring my sorrow and my longing,"
I said, "and here find rest."

I heard the heavenly organ's voice of thunder,
It seemed to give me infinite relief.
I wept. Strange eyes looked on in well-bred wonder,
I dried my tears: their gaze profaned my grief.
Wrapt in the costly furs, and silks and laces
Beat alien hearts, that had no part with me.
I could not read, in all those proud cold faces,
One thought of sympathy.

I watched them bowing and devoutly kneeling,
Heard their responses like sweet waters roll.
But only the glorious organ's sacred pealing
Seemed gushing from a full and fervent soul.
I listened to the man of holy calling,
He spoke of creeds, and hailed his own as best;
Of man's corruption and of Adam's falling,
But naught that gave me rest.

Nothing that helped me bear the daily grinding
Of soul with body, heart with heated brain.
Nothing to show the purpose of this blinding
And sometimes overwhelming sense of pain.
And then, dear friend, I thought of thee, so lowly,
So unassuming, and so gently kind,
And lo! a peace, a calm serene and holy,
Settled upon my mind.

Ah, friend, my friend! one true heart, fond and tender,
That understands our troubles and our needs,
Brings us more near to God than all the splendor
And pomp of seeming worship and vain creeds.
One glance of thy dear eyes so full of feeling,
Doth bring me closer to the Infinite,
Than all that throng of worldly people kneeling
In blaze of gorgeous light.

THE COQUETTE.

Alone she sat with her accusing heart,
That, like a restless comrade frightened sleep,
And every thought that found her, left a dart
That hurt her so, she could not even weep.

Her heart that once had been a cup well filled
With love's red wine, save for some drops of gall
She knew was empty; though it had not spilled
Its sweets for one, but wasted them on all.

She stood upon the grave of her dead truth,
And saw her soul's bright armor red with rust,
And knew that all the riches of her youth
Were Dead Sea apples, crumbling into dust.

Love that had turned to bitter, biting scorn,
Hearthstones despoiled, and homes made desolate,
Made her cry out that she was ever born,
To loathe her beauty and to curse her fate.

INEVITABLE.

To-day I was so weary and I lay
In that delicious state of semi-waking,
When baby, sitting with his nurse at play,
Cried loud for "mamma," all his toys forsaking.

I was so weary and I needed rest,
And signed to nurse to bear him from the room.
Then, sudden, rose and caught him to my breast,
And kissed the grieving mouth and cheeks of bloom.

For swift as lightning came the thought to me,
With pulsing heart-throes and a mist of tears,
Of days inevitable, that are to be,
If my fair darling grows to manhood's years;

Days when he will not call for "mamma," when
The world with many a pleasure and bright joy,
Shall tempt him forth into the haunts of men
And I shall lose the first place with my boy;

When other homes and loves shall give delight,
  When younger smiles and voices will seem best.
And so I held him to my heart to-night,
  Forgetting all my need of peace and rest.

THE OCEAN OF SONG.

In a land beyond sight or conceiving,
  In a land where no blight is, no wrong,
No darkness, no graves, and no grieving,
  There lies the great ocean of song.
And its waves, oh, its waves unbeholden
  By any save gods, and their kind,
Are not blue, are not green, but are golden,
  Like moonlight and sunlight combined.

It was whispered to me that their waters
  Were made from the gathered-up tears,
That were wept by the sons and the daughters
  Of long-vanished eras and spheres.
Like white sands of heaven the spray is
  That falls all the happy day long,
And whoever it touches straightway is
  Made glad with the spirit of song.

Up, up to the clouds where their hoary
  Crowned heads melt away in the skies,
The beautiful mountains of glory
  Each side of the song ocean rise.

Here day is one splendor of sky light
Of God's light with beauty replete.
Here night is not night, but is twilight,
Pervading, enfolding and sweet.

Bright birds from all climes and all regions
That sing the whole glad summer long,
Are dumb, till they flock here in legions
And lave in the ocean of song.
It is here that the four winds of heaven,
The winds that do sing and rejoice,
It is here they first came and were given
The secret of sound and a voice.

Far down along beautiful beeches,
By night and by glorious day,
The throng of the gifted ones reaches,
Their foreheads made white with the spray.
And a few of the sons and the daughters
Of this kingdom, cloud-hidden from sight,
Go down in the wonderful waters,
And bathe in those billows of light.

And their souls ever more are like fountains,
And liquid and lucent and strong,
High over the tops of the mountains
Gush up the sweet billows of song.
No drouth-time of waters can dry them.
Whoever has bathed in that sea,
All dangers, all deaths, they defy them,
And are gladder than gods are, with glee.

"IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN."

We will be what we could be. Do not say,
"It might have been, had not or that, or this."
No fate can keep us from the chosen way;
He only might, who *is*.

We will do what we could do. Do not dream
Chance leaves a hero, all uncrowned to grieve.
I hold, all men are greatly what they seem;
He does, who could achieve.

We will climb where we could climb. Tell me not
Of adverse storms that kept thee from the height
What eagle ever missed the peak he sought?
He always climbs who might.

I do not like the phrase, "It might have been!"
It lacks all force, and life's best truths perverts:
For I believe we have, and reach, and win,
Whatever our deserts.

IF.

Dear love, if you and I could sail away,
With snowy pennons to the winds unfurled,
Across the waters of some unknown bay,
And find some island far from all the world;

If we could dwell there, ever more alone,
While unrecorded years slip by apace,
Forgetting and forgotten and unknown
By aught save native song birds of the place;

If Winter never visited that land,
And Summer's lap spilled o'er with fruits and flowers,
And tropic trees cast shade on every hand,
And twinèd boughs formed sleep-inviting bowers;

If from the fashions of the world set free,
And hid away from all its jealous strife,
I lived alone for you, and you for me—
Ah! then, dear love, how sweet were wedded life.

But since we dwell here in the crowded way,
Where hurrying throngs rush by to seek for gold,
And all is common-place and work-a-day,
As soon as love's young honeymoon grows old;

Since fashion rules and nature yields to art,
And life is hurt by daily jar and fret,
'T is best to shut such dreams down in the heart
And go our ways alone, love, and forget.

GETHSEMANE.

In golden youth when seems the earth
A Summer-land of singing mirth,
When souls are glad and hearts are light,
And not a shadow lurks in sight,

We do not know it, but there lies
Somewhere veiled under evening skies
A garden which we all must see--
The garden of Gethsemane.

With joyous steps we go our ways,
Love lends a halo to our days;
Light sorrows sail like clouds afar,
We laugh, and say how strong we are.
We hurry on; and hurrying, go
Close to the border-land of woe,
That waits for you, and waits for me—
Forever waits Gethsemane.

Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
Bridged over by our broken dreams;
Behind the misty caps of years,
Beyond the great salt fount of tears,
The garden lies. Strive as you may,
You cannot miss it in your way.
All paths that have been, or shall be,
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who can not say,
"Not mine but thine," who only pray,
"Let this cup pass," and cannot see
The *purpose* in Gethsemane.

DUST-SEALED.

I know not wherefore, but mine eyes
  See bloom, where other eyes see blight.
They find a rainbow, a sunrise,
  Where others but discern deep **night.**

Men call me an enthusiast,
  And say I look through gilded haze:
Because where'er my gaze is cast,
  I see some thing that calls for praise.

I say, "Behold those lovely eyes—
  That tinted cheek of flower-like grace."
They answer in amused surprise:
"We thought it such a common face."

I say, "Was ever scene more fair?
  I seem to walk in Eden's bowers."
They answer with a pitying air,
"The weeds are choking out the flowers."

I know not wherefore, but God lent
  A deeper vision to my sight.
On whatsoe'er my gaze is bent
  I catch the beauty Infinite;

That underlying, hidden half
  That all things hold of Deity.
So let the dull crowd sneer and laugh—
  Their eyes are blind, they cannot see.

"ADVICE."

I must do as you do? Your way I own
Is a very good way. And still,
There are sometimes two straight roads to a town,
One over, one under the hill.

You are treading the safe and the well-worn way,
That the prudent choose each time;
And you think me reckless and rash to-day,
Because I prefer to climb.

Your path is the right one, and so is mine.
We are not like peas in a pod,
Compelled to lie in a certain line,
Or else be scattered abroad.

'T were a dull old world, methinks, my friend,
If we all went just one way;
Yet our paths will meet no doubt at the end,
Though they lead apart to-day.

You like the shade, and I like the sun;
You like an even pace,
I like to mix with the crowd and run,
And then rest after the race.

I like danger, and storm and strife,
You like a peaceful time;
I like the passion and surge of life,
You like its gentle rhyme.

You like buttercups, dewy sweet,
And crocuses, framed in snow;
I like roses, born of the heat,
And the red carnation's glow.

I must live my life, not yours, my friend,
For so it was written down;
We must follow our given paths to the end,
But I trust we shall meet—in town.

OVER THE BANISTERS.

Over the banisters bends a face,
Daringly sweet and beguiling.
Somebody stands in careless grace,
And watches the picture, smiling.

The light burns dim in the hall below,
Nobody sees her standing,
Saying good-night again, soft and slow,
Half way up to the landing.

Nobody only the eyes of brown,
Tender and full of meaning,
That smile on the fairest face in town,
Over the banisters leaning.

Tired and sleepy, with drooping head,
I wonder why she lingers;
Now, when the good-nights all are said,
Why somebody holds her fingers.

He holds her fingers and draws her down,
Suddenly growing bolder,
Till the loose hair drops its masses brown
Like a mantle over his shoulder.

Over the banisters soft hands, fair,
Brush his cheeks like a feather,
And bright brown tresses and dusky hair,
Meet and mingle together.

There's a question asked, there's a swift caress,
She has flown like a bird from the hallway,
But over the banisters drops a "yes,"
That shall brighten the world for him alway.

MOMUS, GOD OF LAUGHTER.

Though with gods the world is cumbered,
Gods unnamed, and gods unnumbered,
Never god was known to be
Who had not his devotee.
So I dedicate to mine,
Here in verse, my temple-shrine.

'T is not Ares,—mighty Mars,
Who can give success in wars.
'T is not Morpheus, who doth keep
Guard above us while we sleep,

'Tis not Venus, she whose duty
'Tis to give us love and beauty;
Hail to these, and others, after
Momus, gleesome god of laughter.

Quirinus would guard my health!
Plutus would insure me wealth
Mercury looks after trade,
Hera smiles on youth and maid.
All are kind, I own their worth,
After Momus, god of mirth.

Though Apollo, out of spite,
Hides away his face of light,
Though Minerva looks askance,
Deigning me no smiling glance,
Kings and queens may envy me
While I claim the god of glee.

Wisdom wearies, Love has wings—
Wealth makes burdens, Pleasure stings,
Glory proves a thorny crown—
So all gifts the gods throw down
Bring their pains and troubles after;
All save Momus, god of laughter.
He alone gives constant joy,
Hail to Momus, happy boy.

I DREAM.

Oh, I have dreams. I sometimes dream of Life
In the full meaning of that splendid word.
Its subtle music which few men have heard,
Though all may hear it, sounding through earth's strife.
Its mountain heights by mystic breezes kissed.
Lifting their lovely peaks above the dust;
Its treasures which no touch of time can rust,
Its emerald seas, its dawns of amethyst,
Its certain purpose, its serene repose,
Its usefulness, that finds no hour for woes.
This is my dream of Life.

Yes, I have dreams. I ofttimes dream of Love
As radiant and brilliant as a star.
As changeless, too, as that fixed light afar
Which glorifies vast worlds of space above.
Strong as the tempest when it holds its breath,
Before it bursts in fury; and as deep
As the unfathomed seas, where lost worlds sleep,
And sad as birth, and beautiful as death.
As fervent as the fondest soul could crave,
Yet holy as the moonlight on a grave.
This is my dream of Love.

Yes, yes, I dream. One oft-recurring dream,
Is beautiful and comforting and blest.
Complete with certain promises of rest,
Divine content, and ecstacy supreme.
When that strange essence, author of all faith,
That subtle something, which cries for the light,
Like a lost child who wanders in the night,
Shall solve the mighty mystery of Death,
Shall find eternal progress, or sublime
And satisfying slumber for all time.
This is my dream of Death.

THE PAST.

I fling my past behind me, like a robe
Worn threadbare in the seams, and out of date.
I have outgrown it. Wherefore should I weep
And dwell upon its beauty, and its dyes
Of Oriental splendor, or complain
That I must needs discard it? I can weave
Upon the shuttles of the future years
A fabric far more durable. Subdued,
It may be, in the blending of its hues,
Where somber shades commingle, yet the gleam
Of golden warp shall shoot it through and through,
While over all a fadeless luster lies,
And starred with gems made out of crystalled tears.
My new robe shall be richer than the old.

THE SONNET.

Alone it stands in Poesy's fair land,
  A temple by the muses set apart;
  A perfect structure of consummate art,
By artists builded and by genius planned.
Beyond the reach of the apprentice hand,
  Beyond the ken of the untutored heart,
  Like a fine carving in a common mart,
Only the favored few will understand.
A *chef-d'œuvre* toiled over with great care,
  Yet which the unseeing careless crowd goes by,
A plainly set, but well-cut solitaire,
An ancient bit of pottery, too rare
  To please or hold aught save the special eye,
These only with the sonnet can compare.

SECRETS.

Think not some knowledge rests with thee alone
  Why, even God's stupendous secret, Death,
  We one by one, with our expiring breath,
Do pale with wonder seize and make our own;
The bosomed treasures of the earth are shown,
  Despite her careful hiding; and the air
  Yields its mysterious marvels in despair
To swell the mighty store-house of things known.

In vain the sea expostulates and raves;
  It cannot cover from the keen world's sight
  The curious wonders of its coral caves.
And so, despite thy caution or thy tears,
The prying fingers of detective years
  Shall drag *thy* secret out into the light.

A DREAM.

That was a curious dream; I thought the three
  Great planets that are drawing near the sun
  With such unerring certainty, begun
To talk together in a mighty glee.
They spoke of vast convulsions which would be
  Throughout the solar system—the rare fun
  Of watching haughty stars drop, one by one,
And vanish in a seething vapor sea.

I thought I heard them comment on the earth—
  That small dark object—doomed beyond a doubt.
  They wondered if live creatures moved about
Its tiny surface, deeming it of worth.
  And then they laughed—'t was such a ringing shout
That I awoke and joined too in their mirth.

USELESSNESS.

Let mine not be that saddest fate of all
To live beyond my greater self; to see
My faculties decaying, as the tree
Stands stark and helpless while its green leaves fall.
Let me hear rather the imperious call,
Which all men dread, in my glad morning time,
And follow death ere I have reached my prime,
Or drunk the strengthening cordial of life's gall.
The lightning's stroke or the fierce tempest blast
Which fells the green tree to the earth to-day
Is kinder than the calm that lets it last,
Unhappy witness of its own decay.
May no man ever look on me and say,
"She lives, but all her usefulness is past."

WILL.

There is no chance, no destiny, no fate,
Can circumvent or hinder or control
The firm resolve of a determined soul.
Gifts count for nothing; will alone is great;
All things give way before it, soon or late.
What obstacle can stay the mighty force
Of the sea-seeking river in its course,
Or cause the ascending orb of day to wait?

Each well-born soul must win what it deserves.
Let the fool prate of luck. The fortunate
Is he whose earnest purpose never swerves,
Whose slightest action or inaction serves
The one great aim.
Why, even Death stands still,
And waits an hour sometimes for such a will.

WINTER RAIN.

Falling upon the frozen world last night,
I heard the slow beat of the Winter rain—
Poor foolish drops, down-dripping all in vain;
The ice-bound Earth but mocked their puny might,
Far better had the fixedness of white
And uncomplaining snows—which make no sign,
But coldly smile, when pitying moonbeams shine—
Concealed its sorrow from all human sight.
Long, long ago, in blurred and burdened years,
I learned the uselessness of uttered woe.
Though sinewy Fate deals her most skillful blow,
I do not waste the gall now of my tears,
But feed my pride upon its bitter, while
I look straight in the world's bold eyes, and smile.

APPLAUSE.

I hold it one of the sad certain laws
  Which makes our failures sometimes seem more
    kind
  Than that success which brings sure loss behind—
True greatness dies, when sounds the world's applause.
Fame blights the object it would bless, because
  Weighed down with men's expectancy, the mind
  Can no more soar to those far heights, and find
That freedom which its inspiration was.
When once we listen to its noisy cheers
  Or hear the populace' approval, then
We catch no more the music of the spheres,
  Or walk with gods, and angels, but with men.
T'll, impotent from our self-conscious fears,
The plaudits of the world turn into sneers.

LIFE.

Life, like a romping schoolboy, full of glee,
  Doth bear us on his shoulders for a time.
  There is no path too steep for him to climb,
With strong, lithe limbs, as agile and as free
As some young roe, he speeds by vale and sea,

By flowery mead, by mountain peak sublime,
And all the world seems motion set to rhyme,
Till, tired out, he cries, "Now carry me!"
In vain we murmur. "Come," Life says, "fair play!"
And seizes on us. God! he goads us so!
He does not let us sit down all the day.
At each new step we feel the burden grow,
Till our bent backs seem breaking as we go,
Watching for Death to meet us on the way.

BURDENED.

"Genius, a man's weapon, a woman's burden."—*Lamartine.*

Dear God! there is no sadder fate in life,
Than to be burdened so that you can not
Sit down contented with the common lot
Of happy mother and devoted wife.
To feel your brain wild and your bosom rife
With all the sea's commotion; to be fraught
With fires and frenzies which you have not sought,
And weighed down with the wide world's weary strife.

To feel a fever alway in your breast,
To lean and hear half in affright, half shame,
A loud-voiced public boldly mouth your name,
To reap your hard-sown harvest in unrest,
And know, however great your meed of fame,
You are but a weak woman at the best.

THE STORY.

They met each other in the glade—
  She lifted up her eyes;
Alack the day! Alack the maid!
  She blushed in swift surprise.
Alas! alas! the woe that comes from lifting up the eyes.

The pail was full, the path was steep—
  He reached to her his hand;
She felt her warm young pulses leap,
  But did not understand.
Alas! alas! the woe that comes from clasping hand with hand.

She sat beside him in the wood—
  He wooed with words and sighs;
Ah! love in spring seems sweet and good,
  And maidens are not wise.
Alas! alas! the woe that comes from listing lovers' sighs.

The summer sun shone fairly down,
  The wind blew from the south;
As blue eyes gazed in eyes of brown,
  His kiss fell on her mouth.
Alas! alas! the woe that comes from kisses on the mouth.

And now the autumn time is near,
The lover roves away,
With breaking heart and falling tear,
She sits the livelong day.
Alas! alas! for breaking hearts when lovers rove away.

LET THEM GO.

Let the dream go. Are there not other dreams
In vastness of clouds hid from thy sight
That yet shall gild with beautiful gold gleams,
And shoot the shadows through and through with light?
What matters one lost vision of the night?
Let the dream go!

Let the hope set. Are there not other hopes
That yet shall rise like new stars in thy sky?
Not long a soul in sullen darkness gropes
Before some light is lent it from on high
What folly to think happiness gone by!
Let the hope set!

Let the joy fade. Are there not other joys,
Like frost-bound bulbs, that yet shall start and bloom?
Severe must be the winter that destroys
The hardy roots locked in their silent tomb.
What cares the earth for her brief time of gloom?
Let the joy fade!

Let the love die. Are there not other loves
As beautiful and full of sweet unrest,
Flying through space like snowy-pinioned doves?
They yet shall come and nestle in thy breast,
And thou shalt say of each, "Lo, this is best!"
Let the love die!

THE ENGINE.

Into the gloom of the deep, dark night,
With panting breath and a startled scream;
Swift as a bird in sudden flight
Darts this creature of steel and steam.

Awful dangers are lurking nigh,
Rocks and chasms are near the track,
But straight by the light of its great white eye
It speeds through the shadows, dense and black.

Terrible thoughts and fierce desires
Trouble its mad heart many an hour,
Where burn and smoulder the hidden fires,
Coupled ever with might and power.

It hates, as a wild horse hates the rein,
The narrow track by vale and hill;
And shrieks with a cry of startled pain,
And longs to follow its own wild will.

Oh, what am I but an engine, shod
With muscle and flesh, by the hand of God,
Speeding on through the dense, dark night,
Guided alone by the soul's white light.

Often and often my mad heart tires,
And hates its way with a bitter hate,
And longs to follow its own desires,
And leave the end in the hands of fate.

O, mighty engine of steel and steam;
O, human engine of blood and bone,
Follow the white light's certain beam—
There lies safety, and there alone.

The narrow track of fearless truth,
Lit by the soul's great eye of light,
O passionate heart of restless youth,
Alone will carry you through the night.

NOTHING NEW.

From the dawn of spring till the year grows hoary,
Nothing is new that is done or said,
The leaves are telling the same old story—
"Budding, bursting, dying, dead."
And ever and always the wild bird's chorus
Is "coming, building, flying, fled."

Never the round earth roams or ranges
Out of her circuit, so old, so old,
And the smile o' the sun knows but these changes—
Beaming, burning, tender, cold,
As Spring time softens or Winter estranges
The mighty heart of this orb of gold.

From our great sire's birth to the last morn's breaking
There were tempest, sunshine, fruit and frost,
And the sea was calm or the sea was shaking
His mighty main like a lion crossed,
And ever this cry the heart was making—
Longing, loving, losing, lost.

Forever the wild wind wanders, crying,
Southerly, easterly, north and west,
And one worn song the fields are sighing,
"Sowing, growing, harvest, rest,"
And the tired thought of the world, replying
Like an echo to what is last and best,
Murmurs—"Rest."

DREAMS.

Thank God for dreams! I, desolate and lone,
In the dark curtained night, did seem to be
The centre where all golden sun-rays shone,
And, sitting there, held converse sweet with thee.

No shadow lurked between us; all was bright
And beautiful as in the hours gone by,
I smiled, and was rewarded by the light
Of olden days soft beaming from thine eye.
Thank God, thank God for dreams!

I thought the birds all listened; for thy voice
Pulsed through the air, like beat of silver wings.
It made each chamber of my soul rejoice
And thrilled along my heart's tear-rusted strings.
As some devout and ever-prayerful nun
Tells her bright beads, and counts them o'er and o'er,
Thy golden words I gathered, one by one,
And slipped them into memory's precious store.
Thank God, thank God for dreams!

My lips met thine in one ecstatic kiss.
Hand pressed in hand, and heart to heart we sat.
Why even now I am surcharged with bliss—
With joy supreme, if I but think of that.
No fear of separation or of change
Crept in to mar our sweet serene content.
In that blest vision, nothing could estrange
Our wedded souls, in perfect union blent.
Thank God, thank God for dreams!

Thank God for dreams! when nothing else is left.
When the sick soul, all tortured with its pain,
Knowing itself forever more bereft,
Finds waiting hopeless and all watching vain,

When empty arms grow rigid with their ache,
When eyes are blinded with sad tides of tears,
When stricken hearts do suffer yet not break,
For loss of those who come not with the years—
Thank God, thank God for dreams!

HELENA.

Last night I saw Helena. She whose praise
Of late all men have sounded. She for whom
Young Angus rashly sought a silent tomb
Rather than live without her all his days.

Wise men go mad who look upon her long,
She is so ripe with dangers. Yet meanwhile
I find no fascination in her smile,
Although I make her theme of this poor song.

"Her golden tresses?" yes, they may be fair,
And yet to me each shining silken tress
Seems robbed of beauty and all lusterless—
Too many hands have stroked Helena's hair.

(I know a little maiden so demure
She will not let her one true lover's hands
In playful fondness touch her soft brown bands.
So dainty-minded is she, and so pure.)

"Her great dark eyes that flash like gems at night?
Large, long-lashed eyes and lustrous?" that may be,
And yet they are not beautiful to me.
Too many hearts have sunned in their delight.

(I mind me of two tender blue eyes, hid
So underneath white curtains, and so veiled
That I have sometimes plead for hours, and failed
To see more than the shyly lifted lid.)

"Her perfect mouth so like a carvèd kiss?"
"Her honeyed mouth, where hearts do, fly-like, drown?"
I would not taste its sweetness for a crown;
Too many lips have drank its nectared bliss.

(I know a mouth whose virgin dew, undried,
Lies like a young grape's bloom, untouched and sweet,
And though I plead in passion at her feet,
She would not let me brush it if I died.)

In vain, Helena! though wise men may vie
For thy rare smile or die from loss of it,
Armored by my sweet lady's trust, I sit,
And know thou art not worth her faintest sigh.

NOTHING REMAINS.

Nothing remains of unrecorded ages
That lie in the silent cemetery of time;
Their wisdom may have shamed our wisest sages,
Their glory may have been indeed sublime.
How weak do seem our strivings after power,
How poor the grandest efforts of our brains,
If out of all we are, in one short hour
Nothing remains.

Nothing remains but the Eternal Spaces,
Time and decay uproot the forest trees.
Even the mighty mountains leave their places,
And sink their haughty heads beneath strange seas;
The great earth writhes in some convulsive spasm
And turns the proudest cities into plains.
The level sea becomes a yawning chasm—
Nothing remains.

Nothing remains but the Eternal Forces,
The sad seas cease complaining and grow dry.
Rivers are drained and altered in their courses,
Great stars pass out and vanish from the sky.
Ideas die, and old religions perish,
Our rarest pleasures and our keenest pains
Are swept away with all we hate or cherish—
Nothing remains.

Nothing remains but the Eternal Nameless
And all-creative spirit of the Law,
Uncomprehended, comprehensive, blameless,
Invincible, resistless, with no flaw;
So full of love it must create forever,
Destroying that it may create again—
Persistent and perfecting in endeavor,
It yet must bring forth angels, after men—
This, this remains.

LEAN DOWN.

Lean down and lift me higher, Josephine!
From the Eternal Hills hast thou not seen
How I do strive for heights? but lacking wings,
I cannot grasp at once those better things
To which I in my inmost soul aspire.
Lean down and lift me higher.

I grope along—not desolate or sad,
For youth and hope and health all keep me glad;
But too bright sunlight, sometimes, makes us blind,
And I do grope for heights I cannot find
Oh, thou must know my one supreme desire—
Lean down and lift me higher.

Not long ago we trod the self-same way.
Thou knowest how, from day to fleeting day

Our souls were vexed with trifles, and our feet,
Were lured aside to by-paths which seemed sweet,
But only served to hinder and to tire;
Lean down and lift me higher.

Thou hast gone onward to the heights serene,
And left me here, my loved one, Josephine;
I am content to stay until the end,
For life is full of promise; but, my friend,
Canst thou not help me in my best desire
And lean, and lift me higher?

Frail as thou wert, thou hast grown strong and wise,
And quick to understand and sympathize
With all a full soul's needs. It must be so,
Thy year with God hath made thee great I know.
Thou must see how I struggle and aspire—
Oh, warm me with a breath of heavenly fire,
And lean, and lift me higher.

COMRADES.

I and my Soul are alone to-day,
All in the shining weather;
We were sick of the world, and we put it away,
So we could rejoice together.

Our host, the Sun, in the blue, blue sky,
Is mixing a rare, sweet wine,
In the burnished gold of his cup on high,
For me, and this Soul of mine.

We find it a safe and royal drink,
And a cure for every pain;
It helps us to love, and helps us to think,
And strengthens body and brain.

And sitting here, with my Soul alone,
Where the yellow sun-rays fall,
Of all the friends I have ever known
I find it the *best* of all.

We rarely meet when the World is near,
For the World hath a pleasing art
And brings me so much that is bright and dear
That my Soul it keepeth apart.

But when I grow weary of mirth and glee,
Of glitter, and glow, and splendor,
Like a tried old friend it comes to me,
With a smile that is sad and tender.

And we walk together as two friends may,
And laugh, and drink God's wine.
Oh, a royal comrade any day
I find this Soul of mine.

WHAT GAIN?

Now, while thy rounded cheek is fresh and fair,
  While beauty lingers, laughing, in thine eyes,
Ere thy young heart shall meet the stranger, "Care,"
  Or thy blithe soul become the home of sighs,
Were it not kindness should I give thee rest
By plunging this sharp dagger in thy breast?
Dying so young, with all thy wealth of youth,
What part of life wouldst thou not claim, in sooth?
  Only the woe,
  Sweetheart, that sad souls know.

Now, in this sacred hour of supreme trust,
  Of pure delight and palpitating joy,
Ere change can come, as come it surely must,
  With jarring doubts and discords, to destroy
Our far too perfect peace, I pray thee, Sweet,
Were it not best for both of us, and meet,
If I should bring swift death to seal our bliss?
Dying so full of joy, what could we miss?
  Nothing but tears,
  Sweetheart, and weary years.

How slight the action! Just one well-aimed blow
  Here where I feel thy warm heart's pulsing beat,
And then another through my own, and so
  Our perfect union would be made complete:

So, past all parting, I should claim thee mine.
Dead with our youth, and faith, and love divine,
Should we not keep the best of life that way?
What shall we gain by living day on day?
What shall we gain,
Sweetheart, but bitter pain?

LIFE.

I feel the great immensity of life.
All little aims slip from me, and I reach
My yearning soul toward the Infinite.

As when a mighty forest, whose green leaves
Have shut it in, and made it seem a bower
For lovers' secrets, or for children's sports,
Casts all its clustering foliage to the winds,
And lets the eye behold it, limitless,
And full of winding mysteries of ways:
So now with life that reaches out before,
And borders on the unexplained Beyond.

I see the stars above me, world on world:
I hear the awful language of all Space;
I feel the distant surging of great seas,
That hide the secrets of the Universe
In their eternal bosoms; and I know
That I am but an atom of the Whole.

TO THE WEST.

[In an interview with Lawrence Barrett, he said: "The literature of the New World must look to the West for its poetry."]

Not to the crowded East,
  Where, in a well-worn groove,
Like the harnessed wheel of a great machine,
  The trammeled mind must move—
Where Thought must follow the fashion of Thought,
Or be counted vulgar and set at naught.

Not to the languid South,
  Where the mariners of the brain
Are lured by the Sirens of the Sense,
  And wrecked upon its main—
Where Thought is rocked, on the sweet wind's breath,
To a torpid sleep that ends in death.

But to the mighty West,
  That chosen realm of God,
Where Nature reaches her hands to men,
  And Freedom walks abroad—
Where mind is King, and fashion is naught:
There shall the New World look for thought.

To the West, the beautiful West,
  She shall look, and not in vain—
For out of its broad and boundless store
  Come muscle, and nerve, and brain.
Let the bards of the East and the South be dumb—
For out of the West shall the Poets come.

They shall come with souls as great
As the cradle where they were rocked;
They shall come with brows that are touched with fire,
Like the Gods with whom they have walked;
They shall come from the West in royal state,
The Singers and Thinkers for whom we wait.

THE LAND OF CONTENT.

I set out for the Land of Content,
By the gay crowded pleasure-highway,
With laughter, and jesting, I went
With the mirth-loving throng for a day;
Then I knew I had wandered astray,
For I met returned pilgrims, belated,
Who said, "We are weary and sated,
But we found not the Land of Content."

I turned to the steep path of fame,
I said, "It is over yon height—
This land with the beautiful name—
Ambition will lend me its light."
But I paused in my journey ere night,
For the way grew so lonely and troubled;
I said—my anxiety doubled—
"This is not the road to Content."

Then I joined the great rabble and throng
That frequents the moneyed world's mart;
But the greed, and the grasping and wrong,
Left me only one wish—to depart.
And sickened, and saddened at heart,
I hurried away from the gateway,
For my soul and my spirit said straightway,
"This is not the road to Content."

Then weary in body and brain,
An overgrown path I detected,
And I said "I will hide with my pain
In this by-way, unused and neglected."
Lo! it led to the realm God selected
To crown with his best gifts of beauty,
And through the dark pathway of duty
I came to the land of Content.

A SONG OF LIFE.

In the rapture of life and of living,
I lift up my heart and rejoice,
And I thank the great Giver for giving
The soul of my gladness a voice.
In the glow of the glorious weather,
In the sweet-scented sensuous air,
My burdens seem light as a feather—
They are nothing to bear.

In the strength and the glory of power,
In the pride and the pleasure of wealth,
(For who dares dispute me my dower
Of talents and youth-time and health?)
I can laugh at the world and its sages—
I am greater than seers who are sad,
For he is most wise in all ages
Who knows how to be glad.

I lift up my eyes to Apollo,
The god of the beautiful days,
And my spirit soars off like a swallow
And is lost in the light of its rays.
Are you troubled and sad? I beseech you
Come out of the shadows of strife—
Come out in the sun while I teach you
The secret of life.

Come out of the world—come above it—
Up over its crosses and graves.
Though the green earth is fair and I love it,
We must love it as masters, not slaves.
Come up where the dust never rises—
But only the perfume of flowers—
And your life shall be glad with surprises
Of beautiful hours.
Come up where the rare golden wine is
Apollo distills in my sight,
And your life shall be happy as mine is,
And as full of delight.

WARNING.

High in the heavens I saw the moon this morning,
Albeit the sun shone bright;
Unto my soul it spoke, in voice of warning,
"Remember Night!"

THE CHRISTIAN'S NEW YEAR PRAYER.

Thou Christ of mine, thy gracious ear low bending
Through these glad New Year days,
To catch the countless prayers to Heaven ascending,—
For e'en hard hearts do raise
Some secret wish for fame, or gold, or power,
Or freedom from all care—
Dear, patient Christ, who listeneth hour on hour,
Hear now a Christian's prayer.

Let this young year that, silent, walks beside me,
Be as a means of grace
To lead me up, no matter what betide me,
Nearer the Master's face.
If it need be that ere I reach the fountain
Where Living waters play,

My feet should bleed from sharp stones on the mountain,
Then cast them in my way.

If my vain soul needs blows and bitter losses
To shape it for thy crown,
Then bruise it, burn it, burden it with crosses,
With sorrows bear it down.
Do what thou wilt to mold me to thy pleasure,
And if I should complain,
Heap full of anguish yet another measure
Until I smile at pain.
Send dangers—deaths! but tell me how to dare them;
Enfold me in thy care.
Send trials, tears! but give me strength to bear them—
This is a Christian's prayer.

IN THE NIGHT.

Sometimes at night, when I sit and write,
I hear the strangest things,—
As my brain grows hot with burning thought,
That struggles for form and wings,
I can hear the beat of my swift blood's feet,
As it speeds with a rush and a whir
From heart to brain and back again,
Like a race-horse under the spur.

With my soul's fine ear I listen and hear
The tender Silence speak,
As it leans on the breast of Night to rest,
And presses his dusky cheek.
And the darkness turns in its sleep, and yearns
For something that is kin;
And I hear the hiss of a scorching kiss,
As it folds and fondles Sin.

In its hurrying race through leagues of space,
I can hear the Earth catch breath,
As it heaves and moans, and shudders and groans,
And longs for the rest of Death.
And high and far, from a distant star,
Whose name is unknown to me,
I hear a voice that says, "Rejoice,
For I keep ward o'er thee!"

Oh, sweet and strange are the sounds that range
Through the chambers of the night;
And the watcher who waits by the dim, dark gates,
May hear, if he lists aright.

GOD'S MEASURE.

God measures souls by their capacity
For entertaining his best Angel, Love.
Who loveth most is nearest kin to God,
Who is all Love, or Nothing.

He who sits
And looks out on the palpitating world,
And feels his heart swell in him large enough
To hold all men within it, he is near
His great Creator's standard, though he dwells
Outside the pale of churches, and knows not
A feast-day from a fast-day, or a line
Of Scripture even. What God wants of us
Is that outreaching bigness that ignores
All littleness of aims, or loves, or creeds,
And clasps all Earth and Heaven in its embrace.

A MARCH SNOW.

Let the old snow be covered with the new:
The trampled snow, so soiled, and stained, and sodden.
Let it be hidden wholly from our view
By pure white flakes, all trackless and untrodden.
When Winter dies, low at the sweet Spring's feet
Let him be mantled in a clean, white sheet.

Let the old life be covered by the new:
The old past life so full of sad mistakes,
Let it be wholly hidden from the view
By deeds as white and silent as snow-flakes.
Ere this earth life melts in the eternal Spring
Let the white mantle of repentance, fling
Soft drapery about it, fold on fold,
Even as the new snow covers up the old.

AFTER THE BATTLES ARE OVER.

[Read at Re-union of the G. A. T., Madison, Wis., July 4, 1872]

After the battles are over,
And the war drums cease to beat,
And no more is heard on the hillside
The sound of hurrying feet,
Full many a noble action,
That was done in the days of strife,
By the soldier is half forgotten,
In the peaceful walks of life.

Just as the tangled grasses,
In Summer's warmth and light,
Grow over the graves of the fallen
And hide them away from sight,
So many an act of valor,
And many a deed sublime,
Fade from the mind of the soldier,
O'ergrown by the grass of time.

Not so should they be rewarded,
Those noble deeds of old;
They should live forever and ever,
When the heroes' hearts are cold.
Then rally, ye brave old comrades,
Old veterans, re-unite!
Uproot Time's tangled grasses—
Live over the march, and the fight.

Let Grant come up from the White House,
And clasp each brother's hand,
First chieftain of the army,
Last chieftain of the land.
Let him rest from a nation's burdens,
And go, in thought, with his men,
Through the fire and smoke of Shiloh,
And save the day again.

This silent hero of battles
Knew no such word as defeat.
It was left for the rebels' learning,
Along with the word—retreat.
He was not given to talking,
But he found that guns would preach
In a way that was more convincing
Than fine and flowery speech.

Three cheers for the grave commander
Of the grand old Tennessee!
Who won the first great battle—
Gained the first great victory.
His motto was always "Conquer,"
"Success" was his countersign,
And "though it took all Sumner,"
He kept fighting upon "that line."

Let Sherman, the stern old General,
Come rallying with his men;
Let them march once more through Georgia
And down to the sea again.

Oh! that grand old tramp to Savannah,
Three hundred miles to the coast,
It will live in the heart of the nation,
Forever its pride and boast.

As Sheridan went to the battle,
When a score of miles away,
He has come to the feast and banquet,
By the iron horse, to-day.
Its pace is not much swifter
Than the pace of that famous steed
Which bore him down to the contest
And saved the day by his speed.

Then go over the ground to-day, boys,
Tread each remembered spot.
It will be a gleesome journey,
On the swift-shod feet of thought;
You can fight a bloodless battle,
You can skirmish along the route,
But it's not worth while to forage,
There are rations enough without.

Don't start if you hear the cannon,
It is not the sound of doom,
It does not call to the contest—
To the battle's smoke and gloom.
"Let us have peace," was spoken,
And lo! peace ruled again;
And now the nation is shouting,
Through the cannon's voice, "Amen."

O boys who besieged old Vicksburg,
Can time e'er wash away
The triumph of her surrender,
Nine years ago to-day?
Can you ever forget the moment,
When you saw the flag of white,
That told how the grim old city
Had fallen in her might?

Ah, 't was a bold brave army,
When the boys, with a right good will,
Went gayly marching and singing
To the fight at Champion Hill.
They met with a warm reception,
But the soul of "Old John Brown"
Was abroad on that field of battle,
And our flag did NOT go down.

Come, heroes of Look Out Mountain,
Of Corinth and Donelson,
Of Kenesaw and Atlanta,
And tell how the day was won!
Hush! bow the head for a moment—
There are those who cannot come.
No bugle-call can arouse them—
No sound of fife or drum.

Oh, boys who died for the country,
Oh, dear and sainted dead!
What can we say about you
That has not once been said?

Whether you fell in the contest,
Struck down by shot and shell,
Or pined 'neath the hand of sickness
Or starved in the prison cell,

We know that you died for Freedom,
To save our land from shame,
To rescue a periled Nation,
And we give you deathless fame.
'T was the cause of Truth and Justice
That you fought and perished for,
And we say it, oh, so gently,
"Our boys who died in the war."

Saviors of our Republic,
Heroes who wore the blue,
We owe the peace that surrounds us—
And our Nation's strength to you.
We owe it to you that our banner,
The fairest flag in the world,
Is to-day unstained, unsullied,
On the Summer air unfurled.

We look on its stripes and spangles,
And our hearts are filled the while
With love for the brave commanders,
And the boys of the rank and file.
The grandest deeds of valor
Were never written out,
The noblest acts of virtue
The world knows nothing about.

And many a private soldier,
Who walks his humble way,
With no sounding name or title,
Unknown to the world to-day,
In the eyes of God is a hero
As worthy of the bays,
As any mighty General
To whom the world gives praise.

Brave men of a mighty army,
We extend you friendship's hand!
I speak for the "Loyal Women,"
Those pillars of our land.
We wish you a hearty welcome,
We are proud that you gather here
To talk of old times together
On this brightest day in the year.

And if Peace, whose snow-white pinions,
Brood over our land to-day,
Should ever again go from us,
(God grant she may ever stay!)
Should our Nation call in her peril
For "Six hundred thousand more,"
The loyal women would hear her,
And send you out as before.

We would bring out the treasured knapsack,
We would take the sword from the wall,
And hushing our own hearts' pleadings,
Hear only the country's call.

For next to our God, is our Nation;
And we cherish the honored name,
Of the bravest of all brave armies
Who fought for that Nation's fame.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

I hold it the duty of one who is gifted
And specially dowered in all men's sight,
To know no rest till his life is lifted
Fully up to his great gifts' height.

He must mold the man into rare completeness,
For gems are set only in gold refined.
He must fashion his thoughts into perfect sweetness,
And cast out folly and pride from his mind.

For he who drinks from a god's gold fountain
Of art or music or rhythmic song
Must sift from his soul the chaff of malice,
And weed from his heart the roots of wrong.

Great gifts should be worn, like a crown befitting!
And not like gems in a beggar's hands.
And the toil must be constant and unremitting
Which lifts up the king to the crown's demands.

AND THEY ARE DUMB.

I have been across the bridges of the years.
Wet with tears
Were the ties on which I trod, going back
Down the track
To the valley where I left, 'neath skies of Truth,
My lost youth.

As I went, I dropped my burdens, one and all—
Let them fall;
All my sorrows, all my wrinkles, all my care,
My white hair,
I laid down, like some lone pilgrim's heavy pack,
By the track.

As I neared the happy valley with light feet,
My heart beat
To the rhythm of a song I used to know
Long ago,
And my spirits gushed and bubbled like a fountain
Down a mountain.

On the border of that valley I found you,
Tried and true;
And we wandered through the golden Summer-Land,
Hand in hand.
And my pulses beat with rapture in the blisses
Of your kisses.

And we met there, in those green and verdant places,
Smiling faces,
And sweet laughter echoed upward from the dells
Like gold bells.
And the world was spilling over with the glory
Of Youth's story.

It was but a dreamer's journey of the brain;
And again
I have left the happy valley far behind;
And I find
Time stands waiting with his burdens in a pack
For my back.

As he speeds me, like a rough, well-meaning friend,
To the end,
Will I find again the lost ones loved so well?
Who can tell!
But the dead know what the life will be to come—
And they are dumb!

NIGHT.

As some dusk mother shields from all alarms
The tired child she gathers to her breast,
The brunette Night doth fold me in her arms,
And hushes me to perfect peace and rest.
Her eyes of stars shine on me, and I hear
Her voice of winds low crooning on my ear.

O Night, O Night, how beautiful thou art!
Come, fold me closer to thy pulsing heart.

The day is full of gladness, and the light
So beautifies the common outer things,
I only see with my external sight,
And only hear the great world's voice which rings
But silently from daylight and from din
The sweet Night draws me—whispers, "Look within!"
And looking, as one wakened from a dream,
I see what *is*—no longer what doth seem.

The Night says, "Listen!" and upon my ear
Revealed, as are the visions to my sight,
The voices known as "Beautiful" come near
And whisper of the vasty Infinite.
Great, blue-eyed Truth, her sister Purity,
Their brother Honor, all converse with me,
And kiss my brow, and say, "Be brave of heart!"
O holy three! how beautiful thou art!

The Night says, "Child, sleep that thou may'st arise
Strong for to-morrow's struggle." And I feel
Her shadowy fingers pressing on my eyes:
Like thistledown I float to the Ideal—
The Slumberland, made beautiful and bright
As death, by dreams of loved ones gone from sight,
O food for soul's, sweet dreams of pure delight,
How beautiful the holy hours of Night!

ALL FOR ME.

The world grows green on a thousand hills—
  By a thousand willows the bees are humming,
And a million birds by a million rills,
  Sing of the golden season coming.
But, gazing out on the sun-kist lea,
  And hearing a thrush and a blue-bird singing,
I feel that the Summer is all for me,
  And all for me are the joys it is bringing.

All for me the bumble-bee
  Drones his song in the perfect weather;
And, just on purpose to sing to me,
  Thrush and blue-bird came North together.
Just for me, in red and white,
  Bloom and blossom the fields of clover;
And all for me and my delight
  The wild Wind follows and plays the lover.

The mighty sun, with a scorching kiss
  (I have read, and heard, and do not doubt it),
Has burned up a thousand worlds like this,
  And never stopped to think about it.
And yet I believe he hurries up
  Just on purpose to kiss my flowers—
To drink the dew from the lily-cup,
  And help it to grow through golden hours.

I know I am only a speck of dust,
  An individual mite of masses,
Clinging upon the outer crust
  Of a little ball of cooling gases.
And yet, and yet, say what you will,
  And laugh, if you please, at my lack of reason,
For me wholly, and for me still,
  Blooms and blossoms the Summer season.

Nobody else has ever heard
  The story the Wind to me discloses;
And none but I and the humming-bird
  Can read the hearts of the crimson roses.
Ah, my Summer—my love—my own!
  The world grows glad in your smiling weather;
Yet all for me, and me alone,
  You and your Court came north together.

PHILOSOPHY.

At morn the wise man walked abroad,
  Proud with the learning of great fools.
He laughed and said, "There is no God—
  'T is force creates, 't is reason rules."

Meek with the wisdom of great faith,
  At night he knelt while angels smiled,
And wept and cried with anguished breath,
  "Jehovah, *God*, save thou my child."

"CARLOS."

Last night I knelt low at my lady's feet.
One soft, caressing hand played with my hair,
And one I kissed and fondled. Kneeling there,
I deemed my meed of happiness complete.

She was so fair, so full of witching wiles—
Of fascinating tricks of mouth and eye;
So womanly withal, but not too shy—
And all my heaven was compassed by her smiles.

Her soft touch on my cheek and forehead sent,
Like little arrows, thrills of tenderness
Through all my frame. I trembled with excess
Of love, and sighed the sigh of great content.

When any mortal dares to so rejoice,
I think a jealous Heaven, bending low,
Reaches a stern hand forth and deals a blow.
Sweet through the dusk I heard my lady's voice.

"My love!" she sighed, "My Carlos!" even now
I feel the perfumed zephyr of her breath
Bearing to me those words of living death,
And starting out the cold drops on my brow.

For I am *Paul*—not Carlos! Who is he
That, in the supreme hour of love's delight,
Veiled by the shadows of the falling night,
She should breathe low his name, forgetting me?

I will not ask her! 't were a fruitless task,
For, woman-like, she would make me believe
Some well-told tale; and sigh, and seem to grieve,
And call me cruel. Nay, I will not ask.

But this man Carlos, whosoe'er he be,
Has turned my cup of nectar into gall,
Since I know he has claimed some one or all
Of these delights my lady grants to me.

He must have knelt and kissed her, in some sad
And tender twilight, when the day grew dim.
How else could I remind her so of him?
Why, reveries like these have made men mad!

He must have felt her soft hand on his brow.
If Heaven was shocked at such presumptuous wrongs,
And plunged him in the grave, where he belongs,
Still she remembers, though she loves me now.

And if he lives, and meets me to his cost,
Why, what avails it? I must hear and see
That curst name "Carlos" always haunting me—
So has another Paradise been lost.

THE TWO GLASSES.

There sat two glasses filled to the brim,
On a rich man's table, rim to rim.
One was ruddy and red as blood,
And one was clear as the crystal flood.

Said the glass of wine to his paler brother,
"Let us tell tales of the past to each other;
I can tell of banquet, and revel, and mirth,
Where I was king, for I ruled in might;
For the proudest and grandest souls on earth
Fell under my touch, as though struck with blight.
From the heads of kings I have torn the crown;
From the heights of fame I have hurled men down.
I have blasted many an honored name;
I have taken virtue and given shame;
I have tempted the youth with a sip, a taste,
That has made his future a barren waste.
Far greater than any king am I,
Or than any army beneath the sky.
I have made the arm of the driver fail,
And sent the train from the iron rail.
I have made good ships go down at sea,
And the shrieks of the lost were sweet to me.
Fame, strength, wealth, genius before me fall;
And my might and power are over all!
Ho, ho! pale brother," said the wine,
"Can you boast of deeds as great as mine?"

Said the water-glass: "I cannot boast
Of a king dethroned, or a murdered host,
But I can tell of hearts that were sad
By my crystal drops made bright and glad;
Of thirsts I have quenched, and brows I have laved;
Of hands I have cooled, and souls I have saved.
I have leaped through the valley, dashed down the mountain,
Slept in the sunshine, and dripped from the fountain.
I have burst my cloud-fetters, and dropped from the sky,
And everywhere gladdened the prospect and eye;
I have eased the hot forehead of fever and pain;
I have made the parched meadows grow fertile with grain.
I can tell of the powerful wheel of the mill,
That ground out the flour, and turned at my will.
I can tell of manhood debased by you,
That I have uplifted and crowned anew;
I cheer, I help, I strengthen and aid;
I gladden the heart of man and maid;
I set the wine-chained captive free,
And all are better for knowing me."

These are the tales they told each other,
The glass of wine and its paler brother,
As they sat together, filled to the brim,
On a rich man's table, rim to rim.

THROUGH TEARS.

An artist toiled over his pictures;
He labored by night and by day.
He struggled for glory and honor,
But the world, it had nothing to say.
His walls were ablaze with the splendors
We see in the beautiful skies;
But the world beheld only the colors
That were made out of chemical dyes.

Time sped. And he lived, loved, and suffered;
He passed through the valley of grief.
Again he toiled over his canvas,
Since in labor alone was relief.
It showed not the splendor of colors
Of those of his earlier years,
But the world? the world bowed down before it,
Because it was painted with tears.

A poet was gifted with genius,
And he sang, and he sang all the days.
He wrote for the praise of the people,
But the people accorded no praise.
Oh, his songs were as blithe as the morning,
As sweet as the music of birds;
But the world had no homage to offer,
Because they were nothing but words.

Time sped. And the poet through sorrow
Became like his suffering kind.
Again he toiled over his poems
To lighten the grief of his mind.
They were not so flowing and rhythmic
As those of his earlier years,
But the world? lo! it offered its homage
Because they were written in tears.

So ever the price must be given
By those seeking glory in art;
So ever the world is repaying
The grief-stricken, suffering heart.
The happy must ever be humble;
Ambition must wait for the years,
Ere hoping to win the approval
Of a world that looks on through its tears.

INTO SPACE.

If the sad old world should jump a cog
Sometime, in its dizzy spinning,
And go off the track with a sudden jog,
What an end would come to the sinning.
What a rest from strife and the burdens of life
For the millions of people in it,
What a way out of care, and worry and wear,
All in a beautiful minute.

As 'round the sun with a curving sweep
It hurries and runs and races,
Should it lose its balance, and go with a leap
Into the vast sea-spaces,
What a blest relief it would bring to the grief,
And the trouble and toil about us,
To be suddenly hurled from the solar world
And let it go on without us.

With not a sigh or a sad good-by
For loved ones left behind us,
We would go with a lunge and a mighty plunge
Where never a grave should find us.
What a wild mad thrill our veins would fill
As the great earth, like a feather,
Should float through the air to God knows where,
And carry us all together.

No dark, damp tomb and no mourner's gloom,
No tolling bell in the steeple.
But in one swift breath a painless death
For a million billion people.
What greater bliss could we ask than this,
To sweep with a bird's free motion
Through leagues of space to a resting place,
In a vast and vapory ocean—
To pass away from this life for aye
With never a dear tie sundered,
And a world on fire for a funeral pyre,
While the stars looked on and wondered?

THROUGH DIM EYES.

Is it the world, or my eyes, that are sadder?
I see not the grace that I used to see
In the meadow-brook whose song was so glad, or
In the boughs of the willow tree.
The brook runs slower—its song seems lower,
And not the song that it sang of old;
And the tree I admired looks weary and tired
Of the changeless story of heat and cold.

When the sun goes up, and the stars go under,
In that supreme hour of the breaking day,
Is it my eyes, or the dawn I wonder,
That finds less of the gold, and more of the gray?
I see not the splendor, the tints so tender,
The rose-hued glory I used to see;
And I often borrow a vague half-sorrow
That another morning has dawned for me.

When the royal smile of that welcome comer
Beams on the meadow and burns in the sky,
Is it my eyes, or does the Summer
Bring less of bloom than in days gone by?
The beauty that thrilled me, the rapture that filled me,
To an overflowing of happy tears,
I pass unseeing, my sad eyes being
Dimmed by the shadow of vanished years.

When the heart grows weary, all things seem dreary;
When the burden grows heavy, the way seems long.
Thank God for sending kind death as an ending,
Like a grand Amen to a minor song.

LA MORT D' AMOUR.

When was it that love died? We were so fond,
So very fond, a little while ago.
With leaping pulses, and blood all aglow,
We dreamed about a sweeter life beyond,

When we should dwell together as one heart,
And scarce could wait that happy time to come.
Now side by side we sit with lips quite dumb,
And feel ourselves a thousand miles apart.

How was it that love died! I do not know.
I only know that all its grace untold
Has faded into gray! I miss the gold
From our dull skies; but did not see it go.

Why should love die? We prized it, I am sure;
We thought of nothing else when it was ours;
We cherished it in smiling, sunlit bowers;
It was our all; why could it not endure?

Alas, we know not how, or when or why
This dear thing died. We only know it went,

And left us dull, cold, and indifferent;
We who found heaven once in each other's sigh.

How pitiful it is, and yet how true
That half the lovers in the world, one day,
Look questioning in each other's eyes this way
And know love's gone forever, as we do.

Sometimes I cannot help but think, dear heart,
As I look out o'er all the wide, sad earth
And see love's flame gone out on many a hearth,
That those who would keep love must dwell apart.

THE PUNISHED.

Not they who know the awful gibbet's anguish,
Not they who, while sad years go by them, in
The sunless cells of lonely prisons languish,
Do suffer fullest penalty for sin.

'T is they who walk the highways unsuspected
Yet with grim fear forever at their side,
Who hug the corpse of some sin undetected,
A corpse no grave or coffin-lid can hide—

'T is they who are in their own chambers haunted
By thoughts that like unbidden guests intrude,
And sit down, uninvited and unwanted,
And make a nightmare of the solitude.

HALF FLEDGED.

I feel the stirrings in me of great things.
New half-fledged thoughts rise up and beat their wings,
And tremble on the margin of their nest,
Then flutter back, and hide within my breast.

Beholding space, they doubt their untried strength.
Beholding men, they fear them. But at length
Grown all too great and active for the heart
That broods them with such tender mother art,
Forgetting fear, and men, and all, that hour,
Save the impelling consciousness of power
That stirs within them—they shall soar away
Up to the very portals of the Day.

Oh, what exultant rapture thrills me through
When I contemplate all those thoughts may do;
Like snow-white eagles penetrating space,
They may explore full many an unknown place,
And build their nests on mountain heights unseen,
Whereon doth lie that dreamed-of rest serene.

Stay thou a little longer in my breast,
Till my fond heart shall push thee from the nest.
Anxious to see thee soar to heights divine—
Oh, beautiful but half-fledged thoughts of mine.

LOVE'S SLEEP.

(Vers de Société.)

We'll cover Love with roses,
And sweet sleep he shall take.
None but a fool supposes
Love always keeps awake.
I've known loves without number,
True loves were they, and tried;
And just for want of slumber
They pined away and died.

Our love was bright and cheerful
A little while agone;
Now he is pale and tearful,
And—yes, I've seen him yawn.
So tired is he of kisses
That he can only weep;
The one dear thing he misses
And longs for now is sleep.

We could not let him leave us
One time, he was so dear,
But now it would not grieve us
If he slept half a year.
For he has had his season,
Like the lily and the rose,
And it but stands to reason
That he should want repose.

We prized the smiling Cupid
  Who made our days so bright;
But he has grown so stupid
  We gladly say good-night.
And if he wakens tender
  And fond, and fair as when
He filled our lives with splendor,
  We'll take him back again.

And should he never waken,
  As that perchance may be,
We will not weep forsaken,
  But sing, "Love, tra-la-lee!"

TRUE CULTURE.

The highest culture is to speak no ill;
The best reformer is the man whose eyes
Are quick to see all beauty and all worth;
And by his own discreet, well-ordered life,
Alone reproves the erring.
  When thy gaze
Turns it on thine own soul, be most severe.
But when it falls upon a fellow-man
Let kindliness control it; and refrain
From that belittling censure that springs forth
From common lips like weeds from marshy soil.

THE VOLUPTUARY.

Oh, I am sick of love reciprocated,
Of hopes fulfilled, ambitions gratified.
Life holds no thing to be anticipated,
And I am sad from being satisfied.

The eager joy felt climbing up the mountain
Has left me now the highest point is gained.
The crystal spray that fell from Fame's fair fountain
Was sweeter than the waters were when drained.

The gilded apple which the world calls pleasure,
And which I purchased with my youth and strength,
Pleased me a moment. But the empty treasure
Lost all its lustre, and grew dim at length.

And love, all glowing with a golden glory,
Delighted me a season with its tale.
It pleased the longest, but at last the story
So oft repeated, to my heart grew stale.

I lived for self, and all I asked was given,
I have had all, and now am sick of bliss,
No other punishment designed by Heaven
Could strike me half so forcibly as this.

I feel no sense of aught but enervation
In all the joys my selfish aims have brought.

And know no wish but for annihilation,
Since that would give me freedom from the thought.

Oh, blest is he who has some aim defeated;
Some mighty loss to balance all his gain.
For him there is a hope not yet completed;
For him hath life yet draughts of joy and pain.

But cursed is he who has no balked ambition,
No hopeless hope, no loss beyond repair,
But sick and sated with complete fruition,
Keeps not the pleasure even of despair.

THE YEAR.

What can be said in New Year rhymes,
That's not been said a thousand times?

The new years come, the old years go,
We know we dream, we dream we know.

We rise up laughing with the light,
We lie down weeping with the night.

We hug the world until it stings,
We curse it then and sigh for wings.

We live, we love, we woo, we wed,
We wreathe our brides, we sheet our dead.

We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear,
And that's the burden of the year.

THE UNATTAINED.

A vision beauteous as the morn,
With heavenly eyes and tresses streaming,
Slow glided o'er a field late shorn
Where walked a poet idly dreaming.
He saw her, and joy lit his face,
"Oh, vanish not at human speaking,"
He cried, "thou form of magic grace,
Thou art the poem I am seeking.

"I've sought thee long! I claim thee now—
My thought embodied, living, real."
She shook the tresses from her brow.
"Nay, nay!" she said, "I am ideal.
I am the phantom of desire—
The spirit of all great endeavor,
I am the voice that says, 'Come higher,'
That calls men up and up forever.

"'Tis not alone thy thought supreme
That here upon thy path has risen;
I am the artist's highest dream,
The ray of light he cannot prison.
I am the sweet ecstatic note
Than all glad music gladder, clearer,
That trembles in the singer's throat,
And dies without a human hearer.

"I am the greater, better yield,
That leads and cheers thy farmer neighbor,
For me he bravely tills the field
And whistles gayly at his labor.
Not thou alone, O poet soul,
Dost seek me through an endless morrow,
But to the toiling, hoping whole
I am at once the hope and sorrow.
The spirit of the unattained,
I am to those who seek to name me,
A good desired but never gained.
All shall pursue, but none shall claim me."

IN THE CROWD.

How happy they are, in all seeming,
How gay, or how smilingly proud,
How brightly their faces are beaming,
These people who make up the crowd.
How they bow, how they bend, how they flutter,
How they look at each other and smile,
How they glow, and what *bon mots* they utter!
But a strange thought has found me the while!

It is odd, but I stand here and fancy
These people who now play a part,
All forced by some strange necromancy
To speak, and to act, from the heart.

What a hush would come over the laughter!
What a silence would fall on the mirth!
And then what a wail would sweep after,
As the night-wind sweeps over the earth.

If the secrets held under and hidden
In the intricate hearts of the crowd,
Were suddenly called to, and bidden
To rise up and cry out aloud,
How strange one would look to another!
Old friends of long standing and years—
Own brothers, would not know each other,
Robed new in their sorrows and fears.

From broadcloth, and velvet, and laces,
Would echo the groans of despair,
And there would be blanching of faces
And wringing of hands and of hair.
That man with his record of honor,
That lady down there with the rose,
That girl with Spring's freshness upon her,
Who knoweth the secrets of those?

Smile on, O ye maskers, smile sweetly!
Step lightly, bow low and laugh loud!
Though the world is deceived and completely,
I know ye, O sad-hearted crowd!
I watch you with infinite pity:
But play on, play ever your part,
Be gleeful, be joyful, be witty!
'T is better than showing the heart.

LIFE AND I.

Life and I are lovers, straying
Arm in arm along:
Often like two children Maying,
Full of mirth and song.

Life plucks all the blooming hours
Growing by the way;
Binds them on my brow like flowers;
Calls me Queen of May.

Then again, in rainy weather,
We sit vis-a-vis,
Planning work we'll do together
In the years to be.

Sometimes Life denies me blisses,
And I frown or pout;
But we make it up with kisses
Ere the day is out.

Woman-like, I sometimes grieve him,
Try his trust and faith,
Saying I shall one day leave him
For his rival Death.

Then he always grows more zealous,
Tender, and more true;
Loves the more for being jealous,
As all lovers do.

Though I swear by stars above him,
And by worlds beyond,
That I love him—love him—love him;
Though my heart is fond;

Though he gives me, doth my lover,
Kisses with each breath—
I shall one day throw him over,
And plight troth with Death.

GUERDON.

Upon the white cheek of the Cherub Year
I saw a tear.
Alas! I murmured, that the Year should borrow
So soon a sorrow.
Just then the sunlight fell with sudden flame:
The tear became
A wond'rous diamond sparkling in the light—
A beauteous sight.

Upon my soul there fell such woeful loss,
I said, "The Cross
Is grevious for a life as young as mine."
Just then, like wine,
God's sunlight shone from His high Heavens down;
And lo! a crown
Gleamed in the place of what I thought a burden—
My sorrow's guerdon.

SNOWED UNDER.

Of a thousand things that the Year snowed under—
The busy Old Year who has gone away—
How many will rise in the Spring, I wonder,
Brought to life by the sun of May?
Will the rose-tree branches, so wholly hidden
That never a rose-tree seems to be,
At the sweet Spring's call come forth unbidden,
And bud in beauty, and bloom for me?

Will the fair, green Earth, whose throbbing bosom
Is hid like a maid's in her gown at night,
Wake out of her sleep, and with blade and blossom
Gem her garments to please my sight?
Over the knoll in the valley yonder
The loveliest buttercups bloomed and grew;
When the snow has gone that drifted them under,
Will they shoot up sunward, and bloom anew?

When wild winds blew, and a sleet-storm pelted,
I lost a jewel of priceless worth;
If I walk that way when snows have melted,
Will the gem gleam up from the bare, brown Earth?
I laid a love that was dead or dying,
For the year to bury and hide from sight;
But out of a trance will it waken, crying,
And push to my heart, like a leaf to the light?

Under the snow lie things so cherished—
Hopes, ambitions, and dreams of men—
Faces that vanished, and trusts that perished,
Never to sparkle and glow again.
The Old Year greedily grasped his plunder,
And covered it over and hurried away:
Of the thousand things that he hid, I wonder
How many will rise at the call of May?
O wise Young Year, with your hands held under
Your mantle of ermine, tell me, pray!

PLATONIC.

I knew it the first of the Summer—
I knew it the same at the end—
That you and your love were plighted,
But could n't you be my friend?
Couldn't we sit in the twilight,
Couldn't we walk on the shore,
With only a pleasant friendship
To bind us, and nothing more?

There was never a word of nonsense
Spoken between us two,
Though we lingered oft in the garden
Till the roses were wet with dew.
We touched on a thousand subjects—
The moon and the stars above;
But our talk was tinctured with science,
With never a hint of love.

"A wholly platonic friendship,"
You said I had proved to you,
"Could bind a man and a woman
The whole long season through,
With never a thought of folly,
Though both are in their youth."
What would you have said, my lady,
If you had known the truth?

Had I done what my mad heart prompted—
Gone down on my knees to you,
And told you my passionate story
There in the dusk and dew;
My burning, burdensome story,
Hidden and hushed so long,
My story of hopeless loving—
Say, would you have thought it wrong?

But I fought with my heart and conquered;
I hid my wound from sight;
You were going away in the morning,
And I said a calm good-night.
But now, when I sit in the twilight,
Or when I walk by the sea,
That friendship quite "platonic"
Comes surging over me.
And a passionate longing fills me
For the roses, the dusk and the dew,—
For the beautiful Summer vanished—
For the moonlit talks—and you.

WHAT WE NEED.

What does our country need? Not armies standing
With sabres gleaming ready for the fight.
Not increased navies, skillful and commanding,
To bound the waters with an iron might.
Not haughty men with glutted purses trying
To purchase souls, and keep the power of place.
Not jeweled dolls with one another vieing
For palms of beauty, elegance and grace.

But we want women, strong of soul, yet lowly,
With that rare meekness, born of gentleness,
Women whose lives are pure and clean and holy,
The women whom all little children bless.
Brave, earnest women, helpful to each other,
With finest scorn for all things low and mean.
Women who hold the names of wife and mother,
Far nobler than the title of a Queen.

O these are they who mold the men of story,
These mothers, ofttimes shorn of grace and youth,
Who, worn and weary, ask no greater glory
Than making some young soul the home of truth,
Who sow in hearts all fallow for the sowing
The seeds of virtue and of scorn for sin,
And, patient, watch the beauteous harvest growing
And weed out tares which crafty hands cast in.

Women who do not hold the gift of beauty
As some rare treasure to be bought and sold,
But guard it as a precious aid to duty—
The outer framing of the inner gold;
Women who, low above their cradles bending,
Let flattery's voice go by, and give no heed,
While their pure prayers like incense are ascending;
These are our country's pride, our country's need.

"LEUDEMANN'S-ON-THE-RIVER."

Toward even when the day leans down,
To kiss the upturned face of night,
Out just beyond the loud-voiced town
I know a spot of calm delight.
Like crimson arrows from a quiver
The red rays pierce the waters flowing
While we go dreaming, singing, rowing
To Leudemann's-on-the-River.

The hills, like some glad mocking-bird,
Send back our laughter and our singing,
While faint—and yet more faint is heard
The steeple bells all sweetly ringing.
Some message did the winds deliver
To each glad heart that August night,
All heard, but all heard not aright;
By Leudemann's-on-the-River.

Night falls as in some foreign clime,
  Between the hills that slope and rise.
So dusk the shades at landing time,
  We could not see each other's eyes.
We only saw the moonbeams quiver
  Far down upon the stream! that night
  The new moon gave but little light
By Leudemann's-on-the-River.

How dusky were those paths that led
  Up from the river to the hall.
The tall trees branching overhead
  Invite the early shades that fall.
In all the glad blithe world, oh, never
  Were hearts more free from care than when
  We wandered through those walks, we ten,
By Leudemann's-on-the-River.

So soon, so soon, the changes came.
  This August day we two alone,
On that same river, not the same,
  Dream of a night forever flown.
Strange distances have come to sever
  The hearts that gayly beat in pleasure,
  Long miles we cannot cross or measure—
From Leudemann's-on-the-River.

We'll pluck two leaves, dear friend, to-day.
  The green, the russet! seems it strange
  So soon, so soon, the leaves can change!
Ah, me! so runs all life away.

This night wind chills me, and I shiver;
The Summer time is almost past.
One more good-bye—perhaps the last
To Leudemann's-on-the-River.

IN THE LONG RUN.

In the long run fame finds the deserving man.
The lucky wight may prosper for a day,
But in good time true merit leads the van,
And vain pretense, unnoticed, goes its way.
There is no Chance, no Destiny, no Fate,
But Fortune smiles on those who work and wait,
In the long run.

In the long run all goodly sorrow pays,
There is no better thing than righteous pain,
The sleepless nights, the awful thorn-crowned days,
Bring sure reward to tortured soul and brain.
Unmeaning joys enervate in the end,
But sorrow yields a glorious dividend
In the long run.

In the long run all hidden things are known,
The eye of truth will penetrate the night,
And good or ill, thy secret shall be known,
However well 't is guarded from the light.
All the unspoken motives of the breast
Are fathomed by the years and stand confest
In the long run.

In the long run all love is paid by love,
Though undervalued by the hosts of earth;
The great eternal Government above
Keeps strict account and will redeem its worth.
Give thy love freely; do not count the cost;
So beautiful a thing was never lost
In the long run.

PLEA TO SCIENCE.

O Science reaching backward through the distance,
Most earnest child of God,
Exposing all the secrets of existence,
With thy divining rod,
I bid thee speed up to the heights supernal,
Clear thinker, ne'er sufficed;
Go seek and bind the laws and truths eternal,
But leave me Christ.

Upon the vanity of pious sages
Let in the light of day.
Break down the superstitions of all ages—
Thrust bigotry away;
Stride on, and bid all stubborn foes defiance
Let Truth and Reason reign.
But I beseech thee, O Immortal Science,
Let Christ remain.

What canst thou give to help me bear my crosses,
In place of Him, my Lord?
And what to recompense for all my losses,
And bring me sweet reward?
Thou couldst not with thy clear, cold eyes of reason,
Thou couldst not comfort me
Like one who passed through that tear-blotted season,
In sad Gethsemane!

Through all the weary, wearing hour of sorrow,
What word that thou hast said,
Would make me strong to wait for some to-morrow
When I should find my dead?
When I am weak, and desolate, and lonely—
And prone to follow wrong?
Not thou, O Science—Christ, my Savior, only
Can make me strong.

Thou art so cold, so lofty and so distant,
Though great my need might be,
No prayer, however constant and persistent,
Could bring thee down to me.
Christ stands so near, to help me through each hour,
To guide me day by day.
O Science, sweeping all before thy power—
Leave Christ, I pray!

LOVE'S BURIAL.

Let us clear a little space,
And make Love a burial place.

He is dead, dear, as you see,
And he wearies you and me,

Growing heavier, day by day,
Let us bury him, I say.

Wings of dead white butterflies,
These shall shroud him, as he lies

In his casket rich and rare,
Made of finest maiden-hair.

With the pollen of the rose
Let us his white eye-lids close.

Put the rose thorn in his hand,
Shorn of leaves—you understand.

Let some holy water fall
On his dead face, tears of gall—

As we kneel by him and say,
"Dreams to dreams," and turn away.

Those grave-diggers, Doubt, Distrust,
They will lower him to the dust.

Let us part here with a kiss,
You go that way, I go this.

Since we buried Love to-day
We will walk a separate way.

LITTLE BLUE HOOD.

Every morning and every night
There passes our window near the street,
A little girl with an eye so bright,
And a cheek so round and a lip so sweet;
The daintiest, jauntiest little miss
That ever any one longed to kiss.

She is neat as wax, and fresh to view,
And her look is wholesome and clean, and good.
Whatever her gown, her hood is blue,
And so we call her our "Little Blue Hood,"
For we know not the name of the dear little lass,
But we call to each other to see her pass.

"Little Blue Hood is coming now!"
And we watch from the window while she goes by,
She has such a bonny, smooth, white brow,
And a fearless look in her long-lashed eye;
And a certain dignity wedded to grace,
Seems to envelop her form and face.

Every morning, in sun or rain,
She walks by the window with sweet, grave air,
And never guesses behind the pane
We two are watching and thinking her fair;
Lovingly watching her down the street,
Dear little Blue Hood, bright and sweet.

Somebody ties that hood of blue
Under the face so fair to see,
Somebody loves her, beside we two,
Somebody kisses her—why can't we?
Dear Little Blue Hood fresh and fair,
Are you glad we love you, or don't you care?

NO SPRING.

Up from the South come the birds that were banished,
Frightened away by the presence of frost.
Back to the vale comes the verdure that vanished,
Back to the forest the leaves that were lost.
Over the hillside the carpet of splendor,
Folded through Winter, Spring spreads down again;
Along the horizon, the tints that were tender,
Lost hues of Summer-time, burn bright as then.

Only the mountains' high summits are hoary,
To the ice-fettered river the sun gives a key.
Once more the gleaming shore lists to the story
Told by an amorous Summer-kissed sea.

All things revive that in Winter time perished,
The rose buds again in the light o' the sun,
All that was beautiful, all that was cherished,
Sweet things and dear things and all things—save one.

Late, when the year and the roses were lying
Low with the ruins of Summer and bloom,
Down in the dust fell a love that was dying,
And the snow piled above it, and made it a tomb.
Lo! now! the roses are budded for blossom—
Lo! now! the Summer is risen again.
Why dost thou bud not, O Love of my bosom?
Why dost thou rise not, and thrill me as then?

Life without love, is a year without Summer,
Heart without love, is a wood without song.
Rise then, revive then, thou indolent comer,
Why dost thou lie in the dark earth so long?
Rise! ah, thou canst not! the rose-tree that sheddest
Its beautiful leaves, in the Spring time may bloom,
But of cold things the coldest, of dead things the deadest,
Love buried once, rises not from the tomb.
Green things may grow on the hillside and heather,
Birds seek the forest and build there and sing.
All things revive in the beautiful weather,
But unto a dead love there cometh no Spring.

LIPPO.

Now we must part, my Lippo. Even so,
I grieve to see thy sudden pained surprise;
Gaze not on me with such accusing eyes—
'T was thine own hand which dealt dear Love's death-blow.

I loved thee fondly yesterday. Till then
Thy heart was like a covered golden cup
Always above my eager lip held up.
I fancied thou wert not as other men.

I knew that heart was filled with Love's sweet wine,
Pressed wholly for my drinking. And my lip
Grew parched with thirsting for one nectared sip
Of what, denied me, seemed a draught divine.

Last evening, in the gloaming, that cup spilled
Its precious contents. Even to the lees
Were offered to me, saying, "Drink of these!"
And when I saw it empty, Love was killed.

No word was left unsaid, no act undone,
To prove to me thou wert my abject slave.
Ah Love! hadst thou been wise enough to save
One little drop of that sweet wine—but one—

I still had loved thee, longing for it then.
But even the cup is mine. I look within,
And find it holds not one last drop to win,
And cast it down.—Thou art as other men.

MIDSUMMER

After the May time, and after the June time
  Rare with blossoms and perfumes sweet,
Cometh the round world's royal noon time,
  The red midsummer of blazing heat.
When the sun, like an eye that never closes,
  Bends on the earth its fervid gaze,
And the winds are still, and the crimson roses
  Droop and wither and die in its rays.

Unto my heart has come that season,
  O, my lady, my worshiped one,
When over the stars of Pride and Reason
  Sails Love's cloudless, noonday sun.
Like a great red ball in my bosom burning
  With fires that nothing can quench or tame,
It glows till my heart itself seems turning
  Into a liquid lake of flame.

The hopes half shy, and the sighs all tender,
  The dreams and fears of an earlier day,
Under the noontide's royal splendor,
  Droop like roses and wither away.
From the hills of doubt no winds are blowing,
  From the isle of pain no breeze is sent.
Only the sun in a white heat glowing
  Over an ocean of great content.

Sink, O my soul, in this golden glory,
Die, O my heart, in thy rapture-swoon,
For the Autumn must come with its mournful story,
And Love's midsummer will fade too soon.

A REMINISCENCE.

I saw the wild honey-bee kissing a rose
A wee one, that grows
Down low on the bush, where her sisters above
Cannot see all that's done
As the moments roll on,
Nor hear all the whispers and murmurs of love.

They flaunt out their beautiful leaves in the sun,
And they flirt, every one,
With the wild bees who pass, and the gay butterflies.
And that wee thing in pink—
Why, they never once think
That she's won a lover right under their eyes.

It reminded me, Kate, of a time—you know when!
You were so petite then,
Your dresses were short, and your feet were so small.
Your sisters, Maud-Belle
And Madeline—well,
They *both* set their caps for me, after that ball.

How the blue eyes and black eyes smiled up in my face!
'T was a neck-and-neck race,
Till that day when you opened the door in the hall,
And looked up and looked down,
With your sweet eyes of brown,
And *you* seemed so tiny, and *I* felt so tall.

Your sisters had sent you to keep me, my dear,
Till they should appear.
Then you were dismissed like a child in disgrace.
How meekly you went!
But your brown eyes, they sent
A thrill to my heart, and a flush to my face.

We always were meeting some way after that.
You hung up my hat,
And got it again, when I finished my call.
Sixteen, and *so* sweet!
Oh, those cute little feet!
Shall I ever forget how they tripped down the hall?

Shall I ever forget the first kiss by the door,
Or the vows murmured o'er,
Or the rage and surprise of Maude-Belle? Well-a-day,
How swiftly time flows!
And who would suppose
That a *bee* could have carried me so far away?

RESPITE.

The mighty conflict, which we call existence,
Doth wear upon the body and the soul.
Our vital forces wasted in resistance,
So much there is to conquer and control.

The rock which meets the billows with defiance,
Undaunted and unshaken day by day,
In spite of its unyielding self-reliance,
Is by the warfare surely worn away.

And there are depths and heights of strong emotions
That surge at times within the human breast,
More fierce than all the tides of all the oceans
Which sweep on ever in divine unrest.

I sometimes think the rock worn with adventures.
And sad with thoughts of conflicts yet to be,
Must envy the frail reed which no one censures,
When overcome 't is swallowed by the sea.

This life is all resistance and repression,
Dear God, if in that other world unseen,
Not rest, we find, but new life and progression,
Grant us a respite in the grave between.

A GIRL'S FAITH.

Across the miles that stretch between,
Through days of gloom or glad sunlight,
There shines a face I have not seen
Which yet doth make my world more bright.

He may be near, he may be far,
Or near or far I cannot see,
But faithful as the morning star
He yet shall rise and come to me.

What though fate leads us separate ways,
The world is round, and time is fleet.
A journey of a few brief days,
And face to face we two shall meet.

Shall meet beneath God's arching skies,
While suns shall blaze, or stars shall gleam,
And looking in each other's eyes
Shall hold the past but as a dream.

But round and perfect and complete,
Life like a star shall climb the height,
As we two press with willing feet
Together toward the Infinite.

And still behind the space between,
As back of dawns the sunbeams play,
There shines the face I have not seen,
Whose smile shall wake my world to Day.

TWO.

One leaned on velvet cushions like a queen—
To see him pass, the hero of an hour,
Whom men called great. She bowed with languid mien,
And smiled, and blushed, and knew her beauty's power.

One trailed her tinseled garments through the street,
And thrust aside the crowd, and found a place
So near, the blooded courser's prancing feet
Cast sparks of fire upon her painted face.

One took the hot-house blossoms from her breast,
And tossed them down, as he went riding by,
And blushed rose-red to see them fondly pressed
To bearded lips, while eye spoke unto eye.

One, bold and hardened with her sinful life,
Yet shrank and shivered painfully, because
His cruel glance cut keener than a knife,
The glance of him who made her what she was.

One was observed, and lifted up to fame,
Because the hero smiled upon her! while
One who was shunned and hated, found her shame
In basking in the death-light of his smile.

SLIPPING AWAY.

Slipping away—slipping away!
Out of our brief year slips the May;
And Winter lingers, and Summer flies;
And Sorrow abideth, and Pleasure dies;
And the days are short, and the nights are long;
And little is right, and much is wrong.

Slipping away is the Summer time;
It has lost its rhythm and lilting rhyme—
For the grace goes out of the day so soon,
And the tired head aches in the glare of noon,
And the way seems long to the hills that lie
Under the calm of the western sky.

Slipping away are the friends whose worth
Lent a glow to the sad old earth:
One by one they slip from our sight;
One by one their graves gleam white;
Or we count them lost by the crueler death
Of a trust betrayed, or a murdered faith.

Slipping away are the hopes that made
Bliss out of sorrow, and sun out of shade;
Slipping away is our hold on life;
And out of the struggle and wearing strife,
From joys that diminish, and woes that increase,
We are slipping away to the shores of Peace.

IS IT DONE?

It is done! in the fire's fitful flashes,
The last line has withered and curled.
In a tiny white heap of dead ashes
Lie buried the hopes of your world.
There were mad foolish vows in each letter,
It is well they have shriveled and burned,
And the ring! oh, the ring was a fetter,
It was better removed and returned.

But ah, is it done? in the embers,
Where letters and tokens were cast,
Have you burned up the heart that remembers,
And treasures its beautiful past?
Do you think in this swift reckless fashion
To ruthlessly burn and destroy
The months that were freighted with passion,
The dreams that were drunken with joy?

Can you burn up the rapture of kisses
That flashed from the lips to the soul?
Or the heart that grows sick for lost blisses
In spite of its strength of control?
Have you burned up the touch of warm fingers
That thrilled through each pulse and each vein,
Or the sound of a voice that still lingers
And hurts with a haunting refrain?

Is it done? is the life drama ended?
You have put all the lights out, and yet,
Though the curtain, rung down, has descended,
Can the actors go home and forget?
Ah, no! they will turn in their sleeping
With a strange restless pain in their hearts,
And in darkness, and anguish and weeping,
Will dream they are playing their parts.

A LEAF.

Somebody said, in the crowd, last eve,
That you were married, or soon to be.
I have not thought of you, I believe,
Since last we parted. Let me see:
Five long Summers have passed since then—
Each has been pleasant in its own way—
And you are but one of a dozen men
Who have played the suitor a Summer day.

But, nevertheless, when I heard your name,
Coupled with some one's, not my own,
There burned in my bosom a sudden flame,
That carried me back to the day that is flown.
I was sitting again by the laughing brook,
With you at my feet, and the sky above,
And my heart was fluttering under your look—
The unmistakable look of Love.

Again your breath, like a South wind, fanned
My cheek, where the blushes came and went;
And the tender clasp of your strong, warm hand
Sudden thrills through my pulses sent.
Again you were mine by Love's own right—
Mine forever by Love's decree:
So for a moment it seemed last night,
When somebody mentioned your name to me.

Just for the moment I thought you mine—
Loving me, wooing me, as of old.
The tale remembered seemed half divine—
Though I held it lightly enough when told.
The past seemed fairer than when it was near,
As "Blessings brighten when taking flight;"
And just for the moment I held you dear—
When somebody mentioned your name last night.

ÆSTHETIC.

In a garb that was guiltless of colors
She stood, with a dull, listless air—
A creature of dumps and of dolors,
But most undeniably fair.

The folds of her garment fell round her,
Revealing the curve of each limb;
Well proportioned and graceful I found her,
Although quite alarmingly slim.

From the hem of her robe peeped one sandal—
"High art" was she down to her feet;
And though I could not understand all
She said, I could see she was sweet.

Impressed by her limpness and languor,
I proffered a chair near at hand;
She looked back a mild sort of anger—
Posed anew, and continued to stand.

Some praises I next tried to mutter
Of the fan that she held to her face;
She said it was "utterly utter,"
And waved it with languishing grace.

I then, in a strain quite poetic,
Begged her gaze on the bow in the sky.
She looked—said its curve was "æsthetic,"
But the "tone was too dreadfully high."

Her lovely face, lit by the splendor
That glorified landscape and sea,
Woke thoughts that were daring and tender:
Did *her* thoughts, too, rest upon me?

"Oh, tell me," I cried, growing bolder,
"Have I in your musings a place?"
"Well, yes," she said over her shoulder:
"I was thinking of nothing in space."

POEMS OF THE WEEK.

SUNDAY.

Lie still and rest, in that serene repose
That on this holy morning comes to those
Who have been burdened with the cares which make
The sad heart weary and the tired head ache.
Lie still and rest—
God's day of all is best.

MONDAY.

Awake! arise! Cast off thy drowsy dreams!
Red in the East, behold the Morning gleams.
"As Monday goes, so goes the week," dames say.
Refreshed, renewed, use well the initial day.
And see! thy neighbor
Already seeks his labor.

TUESDAY.

Another morning's banners are unfurled—
Another day looks smiling on the world.
It holds new laurels for thy soul to win;
Mar not its grace by slothfulness or sin,
Nor sad, away,
Send it to yesterday.

WEDNESDAY.

Half-way unto the end—the week's high noon.
The morning hours do speed away so soon!
And, when the noon is reached, however bright,
Instinctively we look toward the night.
The glow is lost
Once the meridian crost.

THURSDAY.

So well the week has sped, hast thou a friend
Go spend an hour in converse. It will lend
New beauty to thy labors and thy life
To pause a little sometimes in the strife.
Toil soon seems rude
That has no interlude.

FRIDAY.

From feasts abstain; be temperate, and pray;
Fast if thou wilt; and yet, throughout the day,
Neglect no labor and no duty shirk:
Not many hours are left thee for thy work—
And it were meet
That all should be complete.

SATURDAY.

Now with the almost finished task make haste;
So near the night thou hast no time to waste.
Post up accounts, and let thy Soul's eyes look
For flaws and errors in Life's ledger-book.
When labors cease,
How sweet the sense of peace!

GHOSTS.

There are ghosts in the room.
As I sit here alone, from the dark corners there
They come out of the gloom,
And they stand at my side and they lean on my chair.

There's the ghost of a Hope
That lighted my days with a fanciful glow,
In her hand is the rope
That strangled her life out. Hope was slain long ago.

But her ghost comes to-night,
With its skeleton face and expressionless eyes,
And it stands in the light,
And mocks me, and jeers me with sobs and with sighs.

There's the ghost of a Joy,
A frail, fragile thing, and I prized it too much,
And the hands that destroy
Clasped it close, and it died at the withering touch.

There's the ghost of a Love,
Born with joy, reared with hope, died in pain and unrest,
But he towers above
All the others—this ghost: yet a ghost at the best.

I am weary, and fain
Would forget all these dead: but the gibbering host
Make my struggle in vain,
In each shadowy corner there lurketh a ghost.

FLEEING AWAY.

My thoughts soar not as they ought to soar,
  Higher and higher on soul-lent wings;
But ever and often, and more and more
  They are dragged down earthward by little things,
By little troubles and little needs,
As a lark might be tangled among the weeds.

My purpose is not what it ought to be,
  Steady and fixed, like a star on high,
But more like a fisherman's light at sea;
  Hither and thither it seems to fly—
Sometimes feeble, and sometimes bright,
Then suddenly lost in the gloom of night.

My life is far from my dream of life—
  Calmly contented, serenely glad;
But, vexed and worried by daily strife,
  It is always troubled, and ofttimes sad—
And the heights I had thought I should reach one day
Grow dimmer and dimmer, and farther away.

My heart finds never the longed-for rest;
  Its worldly striving, its greed for gold,
Chilled and frightened the calm-eyed guest
  Who sometimes sought me in days of old;
And ever fleeing away from me
Is the higher self that I long to be.

ALL MAD.

"He is mad as a hare, poor fellow,
And should be in chains," you say.
I haven't a doubt of your statement,
But who isn't mad, I pray?
Why, the world is a great asylum,
And people are all insane,
Gone daft with pleasure or folly,
Or crazed with passion and pain.

The infant who shrieks at a shadow,
The child with his Santa Claus faith,
The woman who worships Dame Fashion,
Each man with his notions of death,
The miser who hoards up his earnings,
The spendthrift who wastes them too soon,
The scholar grown blind in his delving,
The lover who stares at the moon.

The poet who thinks life a pæan,
The cynic who thinks it a fraud,
The youth who goes seeking for pleasure,
The preacher who dares talk of God,
All priests with their creeds and their croaking,
All doubters who dare to deny,
The gay who find aught to wake laughter,
The sad who find aught worth a sigh,

Whoever is downcast or solemn,
Whoever is gleeful and glad,
Are only the dupes of delusions—
We are all of us—all of us mad.

HIDDEN GEMS.

We know not what lies in us, till we seek;
Men dive for pearls—they are not found on shore,
The hillsides most unpromising and bleak
Do sometimes hide the ore.

Go, dive in the vast ocean of thy mind,
O man! far down below the noisy waves,
Down in the depths and silence thou mayst find
Rare pearls and coral caves.

Sink thou a shaft into the mine of thought;
Be patient, like the seekers after gold;
Under the rocks and rubbish lieth what
May bring thee wealth untold.

Reflected from the vasty Infinite,
However dulled by earth, each human mind
Holds somewhere gems of beauty and of light
Which, seeking, thou shalt find.

BY-AND-BY.

"By-and-by," the maiden sighed—"by-and-by
He will claim me for his bride,
Hope is strong and time is fleet;
Youth is fair, and love is sweet.
Clouds will pass that fleck my sky.
He will come back by-and-by—by-and-by."

"By-and-by," the soldier said—"by-and-by,
After I have fought and bled,
I shall go home from the wars,
Crowned with glory, seamed with scars.
Joy will flash from some one's eye
When she greets me by-and-by—by-and-by."

"By-and-by," the mother cried—"by-and-by,
Strong and sturdy at my side,
Like a staff supporting me,
Will my bonnie baby be.
Break my rest, then, wail and cry—
Thou'lt repay me by-and-by—by-and-by."

Fleeting years of time have sped—hurried by—
Still the maiden is unwed;
All unknown the soldier lies,
Buried under alien skies;

And the son, with blood-shot eye
Saw his mother starve and die.
God in Heaven! dost Thou on high,
Keep the promiscd by-and-by—by-and-by?

OVER THE MAY HILL

All through the night time, and all through the day time,
Dreading the morning and dreading the night,
Nearer and nearer we drift to the May time
Season of beauty and season of blight,
Leaves on the linden, and sun on the meadow,
Green in the garden, and bloom every-where,
Gloom in my heart, and a terrible shadow,
Walks by me, sits by me, stands by my chair.

Oh, but the birds by the brooklet are cheery,
Oh, but the woods show such delicate greens,
Strange how you droop and how soon you are weary—
Too well I know what that weariness means.
But how could I know in the crisp winter weather,
(Though sometimes I noticed a catch in your breath,)
Riding and singing and dancing together,
How could I know you were racing with death?

How could I know when we danced until morning,
And you were the gayest of all the gay crowd—
With only that shortness of breath for a warning,
How could I know that you danced for a shroud?
Whirling and whirling through moonlight and starlight,
Rocking as lightly as boats on the wave,
Down in your eyes shone a deep light—a far light,
How could I know 't was the light to your grave?

Day by day, day by day, nearing and nearing,
Hid under greenness, and beauty and bloom,
Cometh the shape and the shadow I'm fearing,
"Over the May hill" is waiting your tomb.
The season of mirth and of music is over—
I have danced my last dance, I have sung my last song,
Under the violets, under the clover,
My heart and my love will be lying ere long.

A SONG.

Is any one sad in the world, I wonder?
Does any one weep on a day like this,
With the sun above, and the green earth under?
Why, what is life but a dream of bliss?

With the sun, and the skies, and the birds above me,
Birds that sing as they wheel and fly—

With the winds to follow and say they love me—
Who could be lonely? O ho, not I!

Somebody said, in the street this morning,
As I opened my window to let in the light,
That the darkest day of the world was dawning;
But I looked, and the East was a gorgeous sight.

One who claims that he knows about it
Tells me the Earth is a vale of sin;
But I and the bees and the birds—we doubt it,
And think it a world worth living in.

Some one says that hearts are fickle,
That love is sorrow, that life is care,
And the reaper Death, with his shining sickle,
Gathers whatever is bright and fair.

I told the thrush, and we laughed together,
Laughed till the woods were all a-ring;
And he said to me, as he plumed each feather,
"Well, people must croak, if they cannot sing."

Up he flew, but his song, remaining,
Rang like a bell in my heart all day,
And silenced the voices of weak complaining,
That pipe like insects along the way.

O world of light, and O world of beauty!
Where are there pleasures so sweet as thine?
Yes, life is love, and love is duty;
And what heart sorrows? O no, not mine!

FOES.

Thank Fate for foes! I hold mine dear
As valued friends. He cannot know
The zest of life who runneth here
His earthly race without a foe.

I saw a prize. "Run," cried my friend;
"'T is thine to claim without a doubt."
But ere I half-way reached the end,
I felt my strength was giving out.

My foe looked on the while I ran;
A scornful triumph lit his eyes.
With that perverseness born in man,
I nerved myself, and won the prize.

All blinded by the crimson glow
Of sin's disguise, I tempted Fate.
"I knew thy weakness!" sneered my foe,
I saved myself, and balked his hate.

For half my blessings, half my gain,
I needs must thank my trusty foe;
Despite his envy and disdain,
He serves me well where'er I go.

So may I keep him to the end,
Nor may his enmity abate;
More faithful than the fondest friend,
He guards me ever with his hate.

FRIENDSHIP.

Dear friend, I pray thee, if thou wouldst be proving
  Thy strong regard for me,
Make me no vows. Lip-service is not loving;
  Let thy faith speak for thee.

Swear not to me that nothing can divide us—
  So little such oaths mean.
But when distrust and envy creep beside us,
  Let them not come between.

Say not to me the depths of thy devotion
  Are deeper than the sea;
But watch, lest doubt or some unkind emotion
  Embitter them for me.

Vow not to love me ever and forever,
  Words are such idle things;
But when we differ in opinions, never
  Hurt me by little stings.

I'm sick of words: they are so lightly spoken,
  And spoken, are but air.
I'd rather feel thy trust in me unbroken
  Than list thy words so fair.

If all the little proofs of trust are heeded,
  If thou art always kind,
No sacrifice, no promise will be needed
  To satisfy my mind.

TWO SAT DOWN.

Two sat down in the morning time,
  One to sing, and one to spin.
All men listened the song sublime—
  But no one listened the dull wheel's din.

The singer sat in a pleasant nook,
  And sang of a life that was fair and sweet,
While the spinner sat with a steadfast look
  Busily plying her hands and feet.

The singer sang on with a rose in her hair,
  And all men listened her dulcet tone;
And the spinner spun on with a dull despair
  Down in her heart as she sat alone.

But lo! on the morrow no one said
  Aught of the singer or what she sang.
Men were saying: "Behold this thread,"
  And loud the praise of the spinner rang.

The world has forgotten the singer's name—
  Her rose is faded, her songs are old;
But far o'er the ocean the spinner's fame
  Yet is blazoned in lines of gold.

BOUND AND FREE.

Come to me, Love! Come on the wings of the wind!
Fly as the ring-dove would fly to his mate!
Leave all your cares and your sorrows behind!
Leave all the fears of your future to Fate!
Come! and our skies shall be glad with the gold
That paled into gray when you parted from me.
Come! but remember that, just as of old,
You must be bound, Love, and I must be free.

Life has lost savour since you and I parted;
I have been lonely, and you have been sad.
Youth is too brief to be sorrowful-hearted—
Come! and again let us laugh and be glad.
Lips should not sigh that are fashioned to kiss—
Breasts should not ache that joy's secret have found.
Come! but remember, in spite of all this,
I must be free, Love, while you must be bound.

You must be bound to be true while you live,
And I keep my freedom forever, as now.
You must ask only for that which I give—
Kisses and love-words, but never a vow.
Come! I am lonely, and long for your smile.
Bring back the lost lovely Summer to me!
Come! but remember, remember the while,
That you must be bound, Love, and I must be free.

AN AFTERNOON.

I am stirred by the dream of an afternoon
Of a perfect day—though it was not June;
The lilt of winds, and the droning tune
That a busy city was humming;

And a bronze-brown head, and lips like wine,
Leaning out through the window-vine
A-list for steps that were maybe mine-
Eager steps that were coming.

I can see it all, as a dreamer may—
The tender smile on your lips that day,
And the glow on your cheek as we rode away
Into the golden weather.

And a love-light shone in your eyes of brown -
I swear there did!—as we drove down
The crowded avenue out of the town,
Through shadowy lanes, together:

Drove out into the sunset-skies
That glowed with wonderful crimson dyes;
And with soul and spirit, and heart and eyes,
We silently drank their splendor.

But the golden glory that lit the place
Was not alone from the sunset's grace—
For I saw in your fair, uplifted face
A light that was wondrously tender.

I say I saw it. And yet to-day
I ask myself, in a cynical way,
Was it only a part you had learned to play,
To see me act the lover?

And I curse myself for a fool. And yet
I would willingly die without one regret
Could I bring back the day whose sun has set—
And you—and live it over.

AN ANSWER.

If one should bring a rose that had been fair,
And very fragrant, and surpassing sweet,
Before it lost its beauty in the heat
Of crowded ball-rooms or the gas-light's glare,
And beg of me to keep it in my hair
Or on my breast through all the coming hours,
Casting aside all fresher, brighter flowers
Which other hands might offer me to wear,
Would it not seem presumptuous?

Yet you bring
The remnant of a heart that long ago
Burned all its fire to ashes; and you say,
"Keep this and cast all other hearts away."
I stooped and blew, and could not raise a glow;
Square in your face I throw your offering.

AQUILEIA.

[On the election of the Roman Emperor Maximus, by the Senate, A.D. 238, a powerful army, headed by the Thracian giant Maximus, laid siege to Aquileia. Though poorly prepared for war, the constancy of her citizens rendered her impregnable. The women of Aquileia cut off their hair to make ropes for the military engines. The small body of troops was directed by Chrispinus, a Lieutenant of the Senate. Apollo was the deity supposed to protect them.—*Gibbon's Roman History.*]

"The ropes, the ropes! Apollo send us ropes,"
Chrispinus cried, "or death attends our hopes."
Then panic reigned, and many a mournful sound
Hurt the cleft air; for where could ropes be found?

Up rose a Roman mother: tall was she
As her own son, a youth of noble height.
A little child was clinging to her knee—
She loosed his twining arms and put him down,
And her dark eyes flashed with a sudden light.

How like a queen she stood! her royal crown,
The rich dark masses of her splendid hair,
Just flecked with spots of sunshine here and there,
Twined round her brow; 't was like a coronet,
Where gems of gold lie bedded deep in jet.

She loosed the comb that held the shining strands,
And threaded out the meshes with her hands.
The purple mass fell to her garment's hem.
A queen new clothed without her diadem
She stood before her subjects.

"Now," she cried,
"Give me thy sword, Julianus!" And her son
Unsheathed the blade (that had not left his side
Save when it sought a foeman's blood to shed),
Awed by her regal bearing, and obeyed.

With the white beauty of her firm fair hand,
She clasped the hilt; then severed, one by one,
Her gold-flecked purple tresses. Strand on strand,
Free e'en as foes had fallen by that blade,
Robbed of its massive wealth of curl and coil,
Yet like some antique model, rose her head
In all its classic beauty.

"See!" she said,
And pointed to the shining mound of hair;
"Apollo makes swift answer to thy prayer,
Chrispinus. Quick! now, soldiers, to thy toil!"

Forth from a thousand throats what seemed one voice
Rose shrilly, filling all the air with cheer.
"Lo!" quoth the foe, "our enemies rejoice!"

Well might the Thracian giant quake with fear!
For while skilled hands caught up the gleaming threads
And bound them into cords, a hundred heads
Yielded their beauteous tresses to the sword,
And cast them down to swell the precious hoard.

Nor was the noble sacrifice in vain;
Another day beheld the giant slain.

RIVER AND SEA.

We stood by the river that swept
In its glory and grandeur away;
But never a pulse o' me leapt,
And you wondered at me that day.

We stood by the lake as it lay
With its dimpled face turned to the light;
Was it strange I had nothing to say
To so fair and enchanting a sight?

I look on your tresses of gold—
You are fair and a thing to be loved—
Do you think I am heartless and cold
That I look and am wholly unmoved?

One answer, dear friend, I will make
To the questions your eyes ask of me:
"Talk not of the river or lake
To those who have looked on the sea."

WISHES FOR A LITTLE GIRL.

What would I ask the kindly Fates to give
To crown her life, if I could have my way?
My strongest wishes would be negative,
If they would but obey.

Give her not greatness. For great souls must stand
Alone and lonely in this little world:
Cleft rocks that show the great Creator's hand,
Thither by earthquakes hurled.

Give her not genius. Spare her the cruel pain
Of finding her whole life a prey for daws;
Of hearing with quickened sense and burning brain
The world's sneer-tinged applause.

Give her not perfect beauty's gifts. For then
Her truthful mirror would infuse her mind
With love for self, and for the praise of men,
That lowers woman-kind.

But make her fair and comely to the sight,
Give her more heart than brain, more love than pride,
Let her be tender-thoughted, cheerful, bright,
Some strong man's star and guide.

Not vainly questioning why she was sent
Into this restless world of toil and strife,
Let her go bravely on her way, content
To make the best of life.

WHAT HAPPENS.

When thy hand touches mine, through all the mesh
Of intricate and interlacèd veins
Shoot swift delights that border on keen pains:
Flesh thrills to thrilling flesh.

When in thine eager eyes I look to find
A comrade to my thought, thy ready brain
Delves down and makes its inmost meaning plain:
Mind answers unto mind.

When hands and eyes are hid by seas that roll
Wide wastes between us, still so near thou art
I count the very pulses of thy heart:
Soul speaketh unto soul.

So every law, or human or divine,
In heart and brain and spirit makes thee mine.

ROMNEY.

Nay, Romney, nay—I will not hear you say
  Those words again: "I love you, love you, sweet!"
  You are profane—blasphemous. I repeat,
You are no actor for so grand a play.

You love with all your heart? Well, that may be;
  Some cups are fashioned shallow. Should I try
  To quench my thirst from one of those, when dry—
I who have had a full bowl proffered me—

A new bowl brimming with a draught divine,
  One single taste thrilled to the finger-tips?
  Think you I even care to bathe my lips
With this poor sweetened water you call wine?

And though I spilled the nectar ere 't was quaffed,
  And broke the bowl in wanton folly, yet
  I would die of my thirst ere I would wet
My burning lips with any meaner draught.

So leave me, Romney. One who has seen a play
  Enacted by a star cannot endure
  To see it rendered by an amateur.
You know not what Love is—now go away!

PRAYER.

I do not undertake to say
  That literal answers come from Heaven,
But I know this—that when I pray,
  A comfort, a support is given
That helps me rise o'er earthly things
As larks soar up on airy wings.

In vain the wise philosopher
  Points out to me my fabric's flaws,
In vain the scientists aver
  That "all things are controlled by laws."
My life has taught me day by day
That it availeth much to pray.

I do not stop to reason out
  The why and how. I do not care,
Since I know this, that when I doubt,
  Life seems a blackness of despair,
The world a tomb; and when I trust,
Sweet blossoms spring up in the dust.

Since I know in the darkest hour,
  If I lift up my soul in prayer,
Some sympathetic loving Power
  Sends hope and comfort to me there.
Since balm is sent to ease my pain,
What need to argue or explain?

Prayer has a sweet refining grace,
It educates the soul and heart.
It lends a luster to the face,
And by its elevating art
It gives the mind an inner sight
That brings it near the Infinite.

From our gross selves it helps us rise
To something which we yet may be.
And so I ask not to be wise,
If thus my faith is lost to me.
Faith that with angels' voice and touch,
Says "Pray, for prayer availeth much."

"LOVE IS ENOUGH."

Love is enough. Let us not ask for gold.
Wealth breeds false aims, and pride and selfishness;
In those serene, Arcadian days of old
Men gave no thought to princely homes and dress.
The gods who dwelt on fair Olympia's height
Lived only for dear love and love's delight.
Love is enough.

Love is enough. Why should we care for fame?
Ambition is a most unpleasant guest:
It lures us with the glory of a name
Far from the happy haunts of peace and rest.
Let us stay here in this secluded place
Made beautiful by love's endearing grace!
Love is enough.

Love is enough. Why should we strive for power?
It brings men only envy and distrust.
The poor world's homage pleases but an hour,
And earthly honors vanish in the dust.
The grandest lives are ofttimes desolate;
Let me be loved, and let who will be great.
Love is enough.

Love is enough. Why should we ask for more?
What greater gift have gods vouchsafed to men?
What better boom of all their precious store
Than our fond hearts that love and love again?
Old love may die; new love is just as sweet;
And life is fair and all the world complete:
Love is enough!

POSSESSION.

That which we had we still possess,
Though leaves may drop and stars may fall;
No circumstance can make it less,
Or take it from us, all in all.

That which is lost we did not own;
We only held it for a day—
A leaf by careless breezes blown:
No fate could take our own away.

I hold it as a changeless law
From which no soul can sway or swerve,
We have that in us which will draw
Whate'er we need or most deserve.

Even as the magnet to the steel
Our souls are to our best desires;
The Fates have hearts and they can feel—
They know what each true life requires.

We think we lose when we most gain;
We call joys ended ere begun;
When stars fade out do skies complain,
Or glory in the rising sun?

No fate could rob us of our own—
No circumstance can make it less;
What time removes was but a loan,
For what was ours we still possess.

MY HOME.

This is the place that I love the best,
A little brown house, like a ground-bird's nest,
Hid among grasses, and vines, and trees,
Summer retreat of the birds and bees.

The tenderest light that ever was seen
Sifts through the vine-made window screen—
Sifts and quivers, and flits and falls
On home-made carpets and gray-hung walls.

All through June, the west wind free
The breath of the clover brings to me.
All through the languid July day
I catch the scent of the new-mown hay.

The morning-glories and scarlet vine
Over the door-way twist and twine;
And every day, when the house is still,
The humming-bird comes to the window-sill.

In the cunningest chamber under the sun
I sink to sleep when the day is done;
And am waked at morn, in my snow-white bed,
By a singing-bird on the roof o'erhead.

Better than treasures brought from Rome,
Are the living pictures I see at home—
My aged father, with frosted hair,
And mother's face, like a painting rare.

Far from the city's dust and heat,
I get but sounds and odors sweet.
Who can wonder I love to stay,
Week after week, here hidden away,
In this sly nook that I love the best—
The little brown house like a ground-bird's nest?

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